DAVE STEVENS' THE ROCKETEER ARTIST'S EDITION

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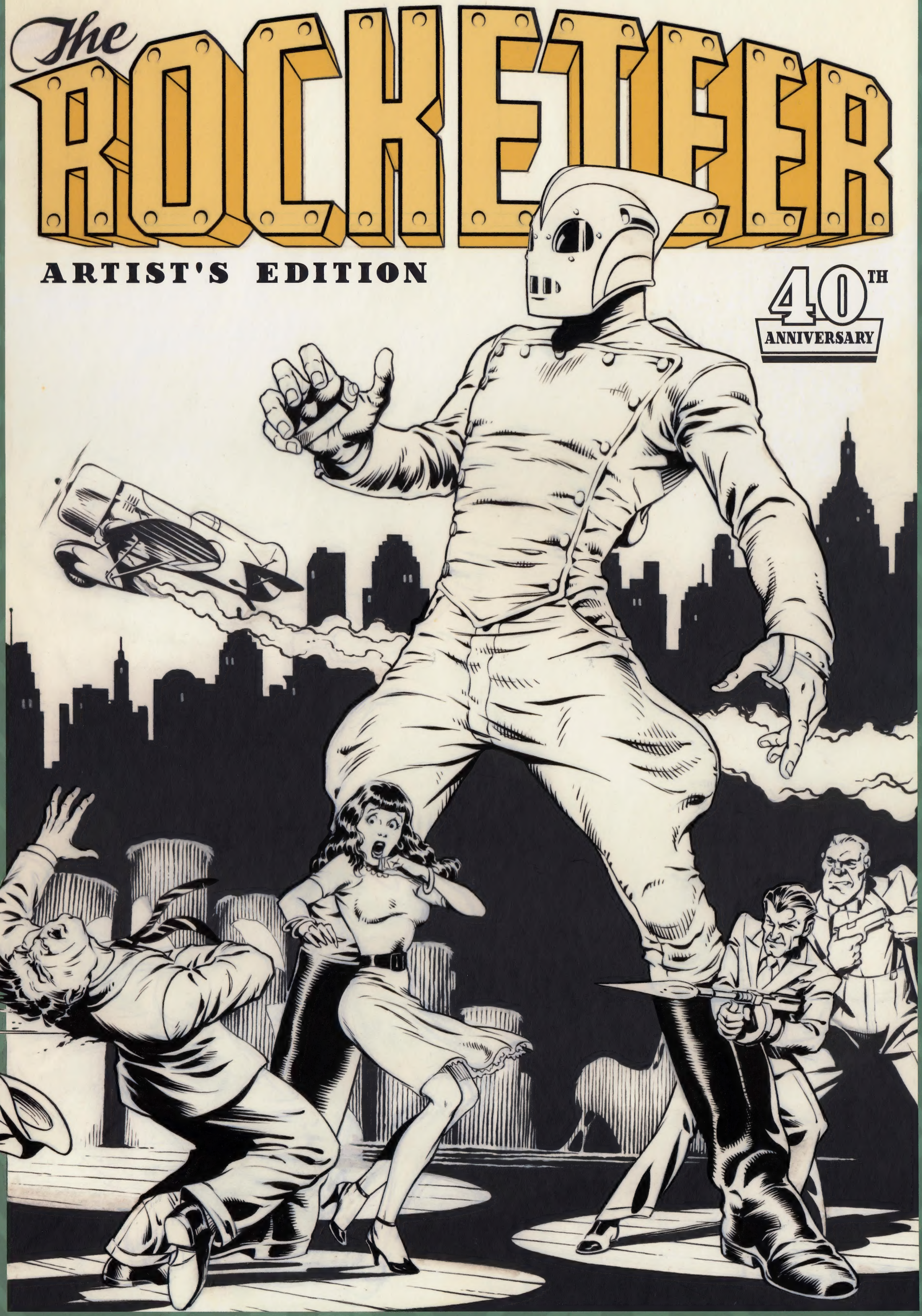

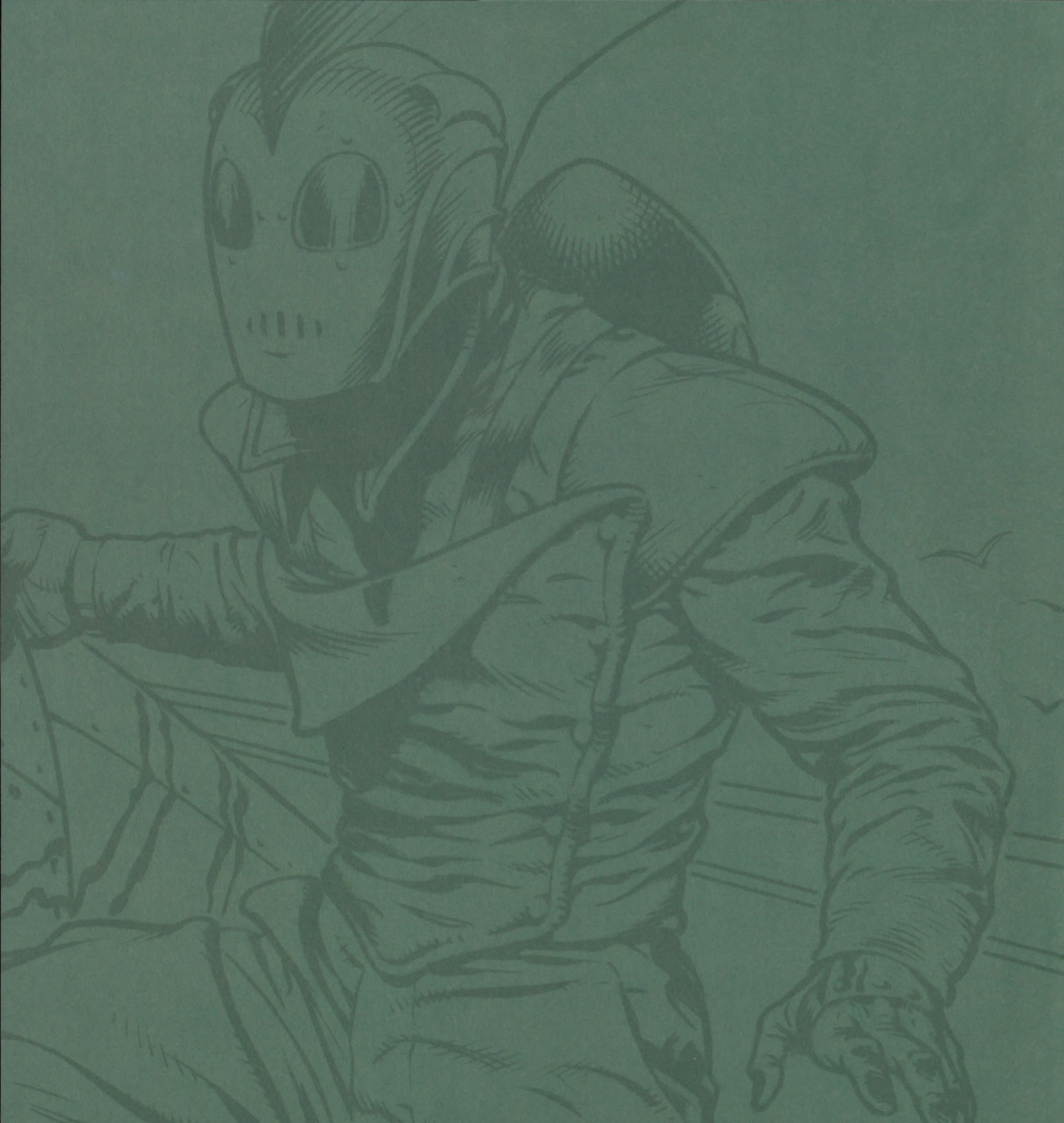

DAVE STEVENS'

The ROCKETEER

ARTIST'S EDITION

DEDICATED TO
THE MEMORIES OF
DAVE STEVENS
AND
CAROLYN STEVENS.

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ARTIST'S EDITION.
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ABOUT THIS EDITION

DAVE STEVENS' THE ROCKETEER ARTIST'S EDITION IS PART OF AN ONGOING SERIES, ONE DEDICATED TO SHOWCASING EXTRAORDINARY ARTISTS IN A FORMAT AS SPECIAL AS THEIR WORK DESERVES.

A VARIATION OF THE ABOVE TEXT APPEARED IN THE VERY FIRST ARTIST'S EDITION PUBLISHED IN 2010. IN THE YEARS SINCE THIS BOOK FIRST APPEARED, THE TWO PAGES NOT SCANNED FROM THE ORIGINAL ART WERE EVENTUALLY TRACKED DOWN AND ARE INCLUDED WITHIN THIS VOLUME.

IN 1982 *THE ROCKETEER* MADE ITS FIRST APPEARANCE IN THE PAGES OF *STARSLAYER* #2, PUBLISHED BY PACIFIC COMICS. OVER THE COURSE OF THE NEXT DOZEN OR SO YEARS, DAVE STEVENS CREATED ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC COMIC CHARACTERS OF ALL TIME, AND EVEN THOUGH ONLY 120-ODD PAGES AND COVERS WERE PRODUCED, THE STRENGTH OF STEVENS' CREATION HAD SUCH AN IMPACT THAT TODAY, 40 YEARS AFTER ITS DEBUT, CLIFF SECORD AND THE ROCKETEER LIVE ON IN THE HEARTS OF FANS NEW AND OLD.

CHAPTERS 1 - 5

STORY AND ART BY DAVE STEVENS

LETTERING BY CARRIE SPIEGLE

ART ASSIST BY JAIME HERNANDEZ

PRELUDE PG (1)

APRIL·1938

The BULLDOG CAFÉ, A STONE'S THROW FROM CHAPLIN AIRDROME, AND SECOND HOME TO SEVERAL MEMBERS OF BIGELOW'S AIR CIRCUS...

EATS

OPEN

...SO THEY TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE BOTTLE, AN' *YANKED* MY LICENSE--AND I HADN'T HAD A *DROP!*

I TELL YA, PEEV... THEY WAS *LAYIN'* FOR ME!

OH, MALCOLM...

CLIFFY SURE GOT HOPPED-UP ABOUT IT! HE SNUCK INTA BIGELOW'S OFFICE THAT NIGHT...

REAL MATURE!

...AN' TOOK ALL A' THE *SCREWS* OUT A' THE OL' MAN'S *CHAIR!*

HAH! THEN HE SMEARED *LIMBURGER ALL* OVER THE OFFICE--*HOO!!*

HEY THERE, BUTCHY--HOW'S THAT OLE' *TAPEWORM* DOIN'?

ICREAM

OH--*I* GET IT...

...I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE WAITIN' FOR!

SNIF SNIF

SOME NICE *BEEF JERKY! MMM-- YUM!*

NOW, DON'T TELL *MILLIE...*

BONNG

OOOF!!

OWW--JEEZ! WHAT'SA BIG IDEA, MILLIE?! I WAS JUST-

1153

I *KNOW* WHAT YOU WERE *JUST* DOING! I *TOLD* YOU WHAT THAT STUFF *DOES* TO HIM!

TO

SANDWIC

AWW... MILLIE! IT DON'T HURT 'IM NONE!

15¢

MAYBE *NOT*, BUT I'VE GOT *CUSTOMERS*, BIRD-BRAIN!

PEN

...Y'THINK I WANT 'IM IN *HERE*, *STINKIN'* UP TH' PLACE??

AAAH... C'MON, BUTCH! *WE* KNOW WHEN WE AIN'T WANTED!

YEA... AN' KEEP 'IM WITH *YOU*, 'TILL HE'S WALKED IT OFF!

GARAGE

SOON...

HOWDY, PARD'NER... Y'ALL STOPPIN' AT TH' WATERIN' HOLE, UP YONDER?

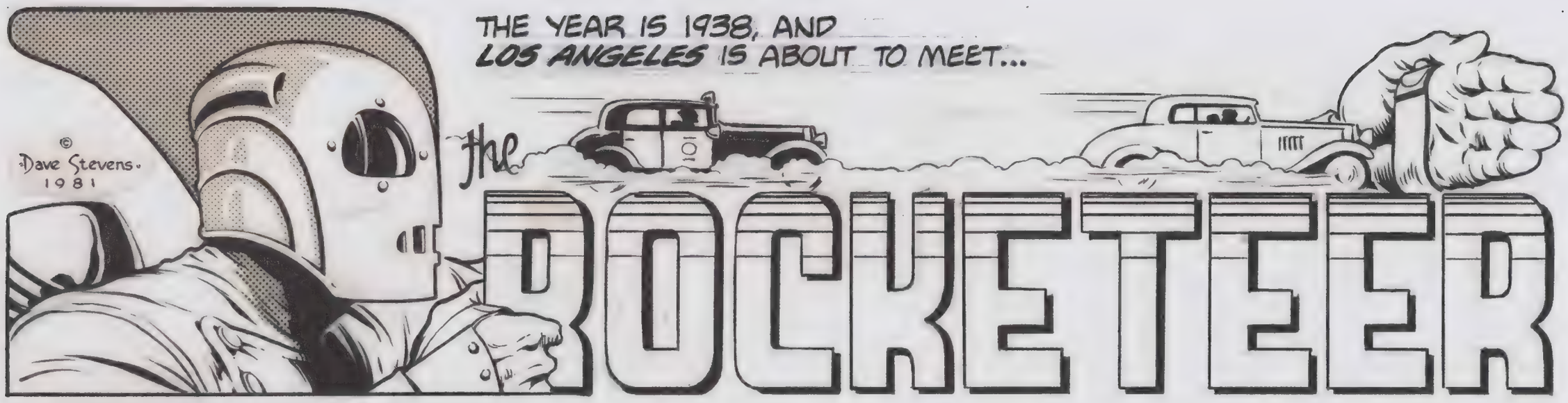
YESSUP! GETTIN' SODA POP!

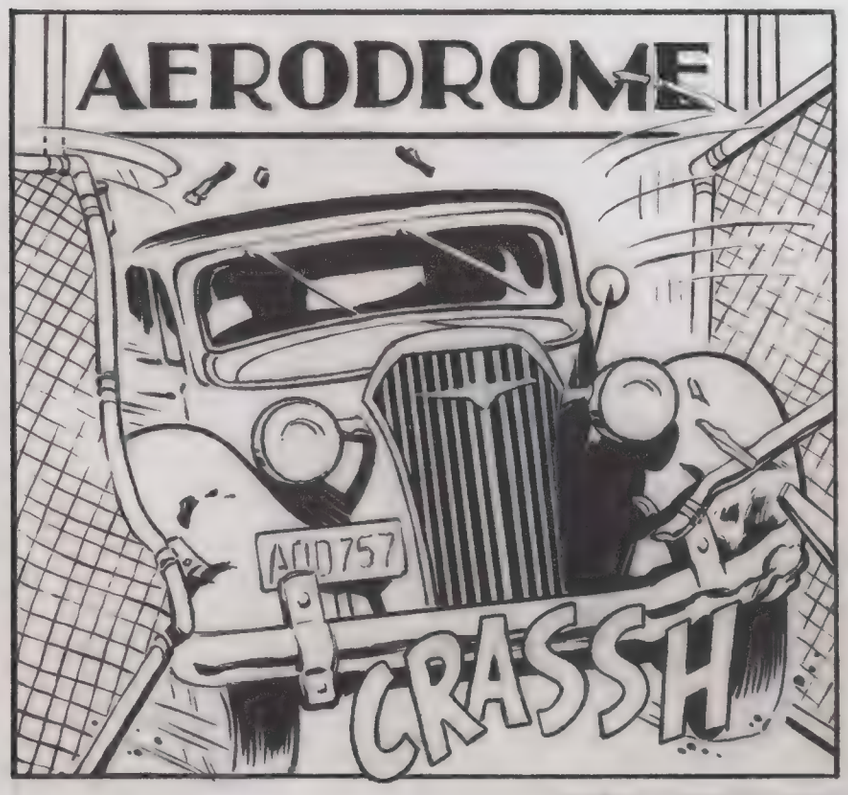
...AN' *LICK-RISH!*

WELL... TELL YA WHAT! IF YOU TAKE BUTCH HERE, *WITH* YA... JUST TAKE 'IM RIGHT ON INSIDE...

...MILLIE'LL GIVE YA A *FREE* ICE-CREAM CONE-- JUST TELL 'ER I SAID SO!

...OH, AN' BE SURE TO FEED 'IM *ALL* A' *THESE* ON TH' WAY... HE *LOVES* 'EM!

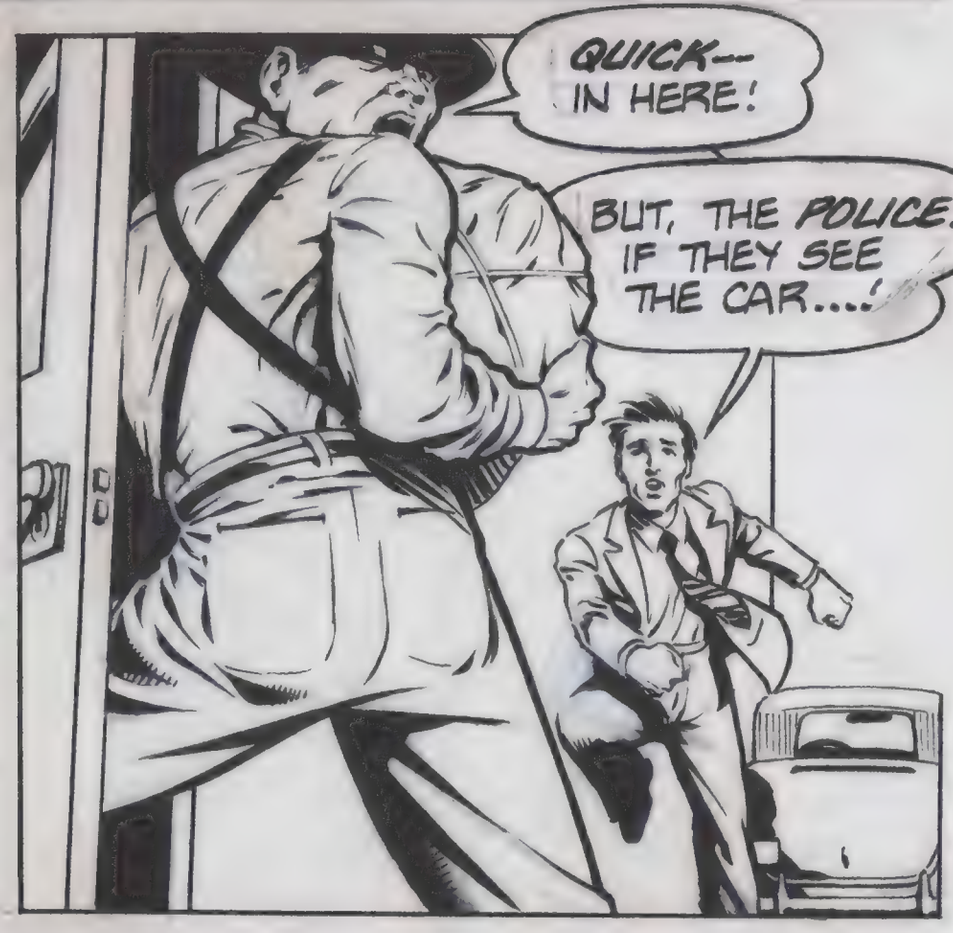

THE YEAR IS 1938, AND
LOS ANGELES IS ABOUT TO MEET...
© Dave Stevens 1981
the ROCKETEER


AERODROME
AUD 757
CRASSH

HEY, BURT--WE JUST LOST A FRONT-GATE!

HOLY--HERE COMES THE LAW--RIGHT ON HIS TAIL!!

THE COUPE SQUEALS AROUND A HANGAR, AND THE DRIVER LEAPS OUT...
SCREEECH


QUICK--IN HERE!
BUT, THE POLICE! IF THEY SEE THE CAR...!

...WE'LL BE CAUGHT!
QUIET! WE'VE GOT ONE CHANCE...

THERE! A RACING PLANE! COME ON--WE'VE ONLY GOT SECONDS!

HEY--THERE'S ONLY ROOM FOR *ONE* IN THERE! WHY *YOU*--

SHUT UP, YOU GUTLESS WORM--

GOIN' SOMEWHERES, PALLY?

YA NEARLY LOST US BACK THERE...

UH--LOOK, WE WERE JUST HAVIN' A LITTLE *FUN,* OFFICER...

AND NOW, STEALIN' A *SPEED PLANE!*

OHHH...*FUN,* HUH? DOIN' *SIXTY* IN A *TWENTY-FIVE* ZONE?!

OUTSIDE, A SMALL GROUP OF *FLYERS* HAS GATHERED...

MAYBE ONE OF YOU *LEAD-FOOTS* WANTS 'TA DRIVE US *DOWNTOWN?*

OFFICER, MY NAME'S CLIFF SECORD. I RENT THAT HANGAR! WHAT'S ALL THE *HUBBUB?*

CAUGHT THESE BIRDS *STEALIN'* THAT STUBBY PLANE--

STUBBY--? HEY--THAT'S *MY* PLANE!!

THEY DIDN'T *HURT* IT, KID...

...WE DIDN'T GIVE 'EM ENOUGH *TIME!*

I HOPE HE'S *RIGHT!* I GOTTA DO A *SHOW* TOMORROW...

WHAT'D THEY WANT WITH *MY* PLANE?

D581R

UH-OH...

THE BUNDLE, UNWRAPPED, REVEALS A COMPACT, *BULLET-SHAPED ENGINE* AND A PACKET OF PAPERS, BEARING THE STAMP: *"TOP SECRET"!*

WOW!! THIS LITTLE BABY DOES *200 MILES PER??*

LOOKS LIKE THEY *FORGOT* SOMETHING!

LIKE MANNA FROM *HEAVEN--!*

THE ANSWER TO MY *PRAYERS* JUST *DROPPED* INTO MY *LAP...!*

PEEVY? LISTEN, I NEED YER HELP ON A NEW ACT I'M PUTTIN' TOGETHER!

FLYING--ONLY WITHOUT A PLANE!

SURE, I'M SOBER! LISTEN, I'LL *SHOW* YOU--

BUT *FIRST,* I'LL NEED SOME *HEAD-GEAR!*

--IF YOU *PROMISE* TO KEEP MUM!

...AND I KNOW *JUST* WHAT TO *DO* WITH IT!!

A SHORT TIME LATER, AT PEEVY'S WORKSHOP, CLIFF EXPLAINS...

WHEW...

--SO, THE COPS MUST'A GOT THERE *AFTER* THEY DUMPED IT IN MY COCKPIT!

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY, HUH? YA BETTER TURN IT IN, KID--!

NIX, PEEV! THEY'RE GONNA HAVE 'TA COME *LOOKIN'* FOR IT! FINDERS *KEEPERS*, I ALWAYS SAY!

AAAHH, CLIFF...!

LOOK, PEEV-- THIS ACT COULD MAKE ME A *LOTTA* DOUGH-- SUMTHIN' I *NEED* MORE THAN *EVER* NOW!

OHH? AN' WHY IS *THAT*?

AAAH, IT'S *BETTY!* SHE SAYS I'M *WASTIN'* MY LIFE, JUST FLYIN' IN AIR SHOWS... AND THAT I SHOULD GET A *STEADY* JOB, AN' *MAKE* SUMTHIN' OF MYSELF!

..PRONTO!

IN OTHER WORDS, "NO MONEY, NO HONEY"? IT AIN'T *LIKE* HER!

LISTEN, PEEV-- SHE WANTS THE GOOD LIFE, AN' I CAN'T GIVE IT TO 'ER, ...*YET!* BUT, WITH THIS *STUNT*--

HOLD IT!

I STILL DON'T GET IT-- SINCE *WHEN* DID *MONEY* MAKE SUCH A DIFFERENCE?

SINCE SHE STARTED RUNNING WITH THAT HOLLYWOOD PHOTOGRAPHER... *SAVVY??*

HUMMPH! SO *THAT'S* IT! WHY DIDN'T YA *SAY* SO? OKAY, ACE...

YA GOT YERSELF A *HELMET!!*

...BUT I *STILL* SAY YER *LOONEY* FER *KEEPIN'* THIS THING!

THANKS PEEV!!

AFTER SEVERAL HOURS...

AWRIGHT, NOW--DON'T MOVE! I'M TRYIN' TA MEASURE FOR LENGTH ON THE *FIN!*

I *SAID* SO, DIDN'T I--? *STOP MOVIN'!*

ARE YA *SURE* IT'LL BE DONE BY MORNING, SO WE CAN TEST IT OUT?

SAY, PEEV--THIS MEANS *ALOT* TO ME-WHAT YER DOIN'...

I AIN'T FORGETTIN' IT...*OW!*

JUST DON'T GET *CAUGHT*, KID! YER BUCKIN' UNCLE SAM, NOW--AN' IT *AIN'T* SUMTHIN' TA TAKE LIGHTLY!

I KNOW...BUT IT JUST SEEMS LIKE *FATE*...

--BESIDES, I'M JUST GONNA FLY IN--DO MY TRICKS--AN' FLY OUT!

I'LL MAKE BIGELOW PAY ME, JUST BEFORE EACH SHOW. HE'LL *NEVER* KNOW ME IN THIS HELMET!

HECK--NOBODY WILL! IT'LL BE A CINCH, PEEV!

YA GONNA TELL BETTY?

NOPE! I'LL JUST SHOW UP AT HER PLACE, WAVIN' A *FIST FULL'A BILLS!* ;HENH!; *THAT'LL* SHOW 'ER, *I'M* NO *CHUMP!*

PEEVY WORKS, WHILE CLIFF RATTLES ON; FED BY HIS EXCITEMENT OVER THE PROSPECT OF A QUICK FORTUNE...

HOURS LATER...

HEY--*WAKE-UP!* IT'S ALL FINISHED! *HEY, CLIFF!!*

HUH?

--I SAID, TH' HELMET'S *FINISHED!*

HOLY SMOKE!! IT'S *TEN O'CLOCK!* I'M S'POSED TA BE FLYIN' A *SHOW*, RIGHT NOW!

QUICK, HELP ME PILE THIS STUFF IN THE CAR!

NUTS! NUTS!!

SOON AFTER, AT THE AIRSHOW, CLIFF ARRIVES--*LATE!* THE SHOW HAS GONE ON WITHOUT HIM...BUT WITH *BAD LUCK* AT THE STICK!

BOSS!

HEY--BOSS!!

WHO'S IN THAT PLANE? WHAT'S HE--

SECORD! WHERE THE BLAZES'VE YOU BEEN?!!

THAT RUMMY *MALCOLM* DECIDED *HE'D* GO UP AND COVER FOR YOU!

MALCOLM? THIS IS ALL MY FAULT! IF THAT OLD LUSH CRACKS UP--*I'M* TO BLAME!

ROY--GET NO. 2 FIRE-TRUCK OUT ON THAT *RUNWAY!*

OKAY!

HEY, *CLIFF*--IT SOUNDS LIKE HE'S *PLASTERED!*

NUTS TO THIS! I'M *NOT* GONNA HAVE HIS DEATH ON *MY* CONSCIENCE--*I'M GETTIN' THE ROCKET!!*

TO
RK
NCE

I OUGHT'A HAVE MY *BRAINS* COUNTED! I DIDN'T EVEN TEST THIS THING YET!!

BUT, I'VE READ ALL THE PAPERS ON IT--SEEMS SIMPLE ENOUGH! ANYWAY...

I REALLY DON'T HAVE MUCH OF A *CHOICE* AT THIS POINT...

...DO I, MALCOLM?!

...OR THE *WILDEST* RIDE OF MY LIFE!

GLIK

THIS COULD BE A QUICK TICKET TO *HELL*...

WOOSH

CONTINUED...
NEXT CHAPTER!

the ROCKETEER™

chapter 2

USING THE STOLEN ROCKET-PACK FOR THE *FIRST* TIME, RACINGPILOT, CLIFF SECORD, HAS TAKEN TO THE SKIES--IN A *DESPERATE* BID TO SAVE THE LIFE OF A FELLOW FLYER...

WHOOEE!! IT WORKS--I'M FLYIN'!!

PEEV WAS RIGHT...THIS HELMET'S *FIN* IS A *PERFECT* RUDDER!

HANG ON, MALCOLM, *HERE I COME!*

BUT CLIFF MISJUDGES HIS SPEED.

YIPE!!

WHUUFF!!

19

GOTTA TRY TA TURN *AROUND*--*--UP....!*

NO! GOTTA CUT THE JETS--I'M COMIN' UP TOO FA--

SKRAAK

ON THE GROUND, THE CROWD *STARES*, IN *BUG-EYED DISBELIEF!*

IS 'DIS REALLY *HAPPENIN??*

HOLY SMOKE! HE *SMACKED* RIGHT INTO THE WING!!

THE IMPACT-- WITH THE ROCKET'S ADDED *THRUST*, CAUSES THE PLANE TO *PLUMMET!*

...WITH CLIFF *STILL* HANGING ON!

AGGH--!! WHAT DO I DO NOW?

MALCOLM--MAL- HE'S OUT COLD!!

HE'S REACHED THE PILOT! *C'MON*, ALREADY! PULL IT UP-- *PULL UP!!*

THEY'RE GONNA *CRASH!*

STICK'S JAMMED!

GOTTA GET HIM UNSTRAPPED! *UGHH- MY CHEST*--FEELS LIKE SOMETHIN'S *BUSTED!!*

GACK!

C'MON, YOU TUB A' GUTS--

C'MON!!

WHERE'S THAT DANGED *FIRE TRUCK??*

AAGH!! HE TOOK OUT THE *WATER-TOWER!!*

WHOOM!

YOU! GET BACK TO THAT *RADIO!!*

HEY! MR. BIGELOW-

LOOK! THEY MADE IT!!

GET THOSE CAMERAS ON 'IM--QUICK! HE'S FLYIN' AWAY!!

MAN-- WHATTA SCOOP!

OOOF!

AT THAT MOMENT, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE AIRFIELD...

HEY, FELLAS-- LAMP THEM *GAMS!*

TAXI

026 411

OH-HO, YOWSAH! HOLD ME *DOWN!!*

BOY-O-BOY, WHATTA DISH! YA THINK MEBBE SHE'S LOOKIN' FER *ME?*

PIPE DOWN, WEASEL!

YEA! GO SUCK AN EGG!

I GOT NEWS FER YOU MONKEYS...*THAT* SNAZZY TOMATO IS *SECORD'S!*

WHAT?!! SECORD??

I'M MORT-IFIED!!

AN' *I* THOUGHT HE WAS A *PANSY-* HUNH!

KNOK KNOK

HI, PEEVY!

BETTY!! JEEZ, I ALMOST GAVE UP ON YA...!

SORRY-- I CAME AS FAST AS I COULD!

KIDDO--HE'S OUT THERE *NOW.* ABOUT TA BREAK HIS NECK...FOR *YOU!!*

APPARENTLY, YA PUT A BUG IN HIS EAR ABOUT *MONEY!* SO, NOW HE'S TRYIN' TA MAKE A QUICK *BUNDLE...*

WHERE'S CLIFF?

CLIK

...USIN' A *STOLEN* EXPERIMENTAL ENGINE!

TO IMPRESS ME?

YOU GOT IT, DOLL--!

--ONLY YOU'RE GONNA TALK HIM *OUT* OF IT, BEFORE HE *KILLS* HIMSELF!

MINUTES LATER, THEY REACH THE AIR-SHOW...

--HE'S GOT IT STRAPPED TO HIS *BACK!*

WHAT?!! OH MY GOD!!

THE *CRAZIEST* THING I EVER SAW IN MY LIFE!--!

HEY, YOU-- WHAT'S HAPPENED OUT THERE?

A *FLYING MAN* SAVED A PILOT!

GENERAL

K-30-29

A FLYING MAN?!! WHERE IS HE?

DUNNO-- HE FLEW AWAY... IN THAT DIRECTION!

CRIPES! HE'S HEADED FER THE *HANGAR!*

HOLD ON!

SCREEEEEE

I GOTTA LAND QUICK-- CAN BARELY BREATHE!

I HOPE I HAVEN'T BROKEN ANY RIBS... IT SURE--HEY!

THOSE BOXES-- THEY OUGHTTA BREAK MY FALL!

...BUT I GOTTA DO THIS JUST RIGHT, AND CUT THE JETS...

...NOW!

WHUP

SPAK!

ALL IS QUIET, AS CLIFF SECORD SLIPS INTO OBLIVION. THERE IS NO APPLAUSE...NO CHEERING CROWDS...

...ONLY THE SILENT SCRUTINY OF AN UN-INVITED AUDIENCE OF ONE!

CHAPTER 3

the ROCKETEER

by Dave Stevens

AFTER THE NEARLY *FATAL* RESCUE OF A FELLOW PILOT, CLIFF SECORD HAS MADE HIS *FIRST* LANDING... AND PERHAPS HIS *LAST*-- AS A *SINISTER* FIGURE LOOKS ON!

WELL, YOU'VE *HAD* YOUR MOMENT OF GLORY, BUB...

NOW LET'S SEE IF MY *HUNCH* WAS RIGHT!

GET LOST!!

PUNT

NOW— I WANNA KNOW *WHO* YOU ARE... AND *HOW* LONG YOU'VE BEEN *POKIN'* YOUR NOSE AROUND HERE!

LONG ENOUGH-- NOW *BACK OFF, FLY-BOY!!*

WHAT *IS* THIS??

DON'T PLAY *DUMB* WITH *ME,* PUNK... NOW TAKE OFF THE *HELMET!!*

NICE AND SLOW...

OH, BROTHER! AM I IN THE SOUP *NOW!!* I'VE GOT *NO* CHOICE...

I THOUGHT SO... NOTHING BUT SMALL CHANGE, WITH SOME *BIG* IDEAS!

ONLY *THIS* STUNT'S GONNA COST YOU, PAL--*PLENTY!* NOW, DROP THE TIN-HAT-- YOU *WON'T* BE NEEDING IT AGAIN!!

THE GUNMAN LEADS CLIFF BEHIND THE HANGAR TO A PARKED SEDAN...

LISTEN, I GOTTA TAKE THIS THING OFF -- IT'S *KILLIN'* ME!

GREAT-- JUST WHAT I NEEDED TO HEAR!

UH-UH! YOU RIDE WITH IT *ON!*

I WANT MY *BOSS* TO *SEE* EXACTLY HOW IT GOT *BANGED-UP!* BOY, HE'S *NOT* GONNA BE *PLEASED!*

X 471125

AS THEY DRIVE AWAY, A SMALL COUPE APPEARS FROM OUT OF *NOWHERE*--AND *SCREAMS* ACROSS THEIR PATH!

HEY!

SCREECH!

THAT *MANIAC* WASN'T EVEN *LOOKING* -- HE COULD'VE *KILLED* US!!

AW, *NUTS!* THAT WAS *PEEV'S* CAR-- AND HE HAD *BETTY* ALONG!

SECONDS LATER, PEEVY RUSHES TO CLIFF'S DOOR!

I HOPE HE'S OKAY!

HUH! I CAN'T FIGURE IT, BETTY...

HE WOULDN'T HAVE GONE TO ***MY*** PLACE... HE KNEW I WAS ***LEAVIN'***!

I'LL LOOK AROUND OUTSIDE!

WHERE ***IS*** HE?? IT ***WOULD*** BE ***JUST*** LIKE HIM TO DISAPPEAR FOR HOURS!

HE'S SUCH A ***CHILD***!

SO IMPLUSIVE, FOOL-HEARTY-- ***ARROGANT***...QOOHH! HE MAKES ME ***FURIOUS***! SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY I EVEN BOTHER WITH HIM...

HE DOESN'T ***BUY*** ME THINGS, LIKE OTHER MEN. AND HE'S ***INSANELY*** JEALOUS...

...EXPECTING ME TO SPEND ***ALL*** MY TIME WITH ***HIM***! IT DOESN'T SEEM TO ***MATTER*** THAT HE'S GETTING ***MORE*** THAN ANYONE ELSE... HE HAS TO HAVE ***ALL*** OF ME!

AND WHAT DO I GET IN RETURN?? ***WORRY***!!

HEY-- BETTY! I'VE ***FOUND*** SOMETHING!

WHAT IS IT PEEVY?

THIS IS THE ***HELMET*** I MADE FOR HIM--

...ONLY THERE'S—

BLOOD!!

AT THAT MOMENT, ON A CANYON ROAD...

SO WHERE ARE WE GOING?

WHADDA YOU CARE? THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT... *OR* YOUR PALS!

HUH? MY *PALS*...?

THE ONES *TAILING* US!

I DON'T KNOW ANYBODY WITH A CAR LIKE THAT!

WE'LL FIND OUT IN A *MINUTE*-- THEY'RE *PASSING!*

THE BIG SEDAN MOVES ALONGSIDE THEM...

THIS COULD BE *TROUBLE...!*

...THEN SWERVES *INTO* THEIR LANE!!

THEY'RE GONNA RUN US OFF THE RO-!

CRUNCH

IN AN *INSTANT,* THE SMALLER CAR IS SENT *HURTLING* INTO SPACE!!

DAVE STEVENS

...AND TO A *GRISLY FINISH!*

SILENTLY AND SWIFTLY, THREE FIGURES MAKE THEIR WAY DOWN THE CLIFF, TO THE *WRECKAGE*...

...TO MAKE *CERTAIN* THAT THERE ARE *NO SURVIVORS!*

AFTER SEVERAL MINUTES...

OTTO--LOOK *HERE!* THE DRIVER'S WALLET...!

A BADGE!

AS I SUSPECTED, THE GOVERNMENT HAS IT'S HANDS IN THE MATTER *ALREADY!*

WE *MUST* RETRIEVE THE ROCKET-PACK, AT *ALL* COSTS--BEFORE OUR PRESENCE HERE IS DISCOVERED...

...BY *OTHER* FEDERAL AGENTS!

FEDERAL--? THAT GUY WAS A *G-MAN??!*

OH...MY *HEAD!*

WHO *ARE* THESE LUGS??

--BUT FIRST WE MUST FIND THE ONE WHO *NOW* HAS IT!

SHALL WE RETURN TO THE AIR-FIELD, TOMORROW?

THAT'S *ME* THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT-- AND THE *ROCKET-PACK!!* THEY MUST BE *PARTNERS* OF THE TWO WHO LEFT IT IN MY PLANE--BUT *WHO ARE* THEY?

YES-- IT WOULD BE *MOST* UNFORTUNATE FOR *BERLIN* TO BE WITHOUT SUCH A WEAPON!

BERLIN???!

HOLEY SMOKE!! THESE GUYS ARE *GERMANS*-- *SPYS!!* WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO? THEY'RE TALKIN' *WAR!!*

ALL I WANTED TO DO, WAS MAKE SOME QUICK *DOUGH* WITH THIS THING IN THE AIR-CIRCUS--SO *BETTY'D* START TAKIN' ME *SERIOUS*-- AND STAY *AWAY* FROM ALL THOSE *GREASY*, HOLLYWOOD *ROMEOS!*

THAT'S ALL I WANTED-- *THEN* I WAS GONNA TURN IT IN!

IF I *LIVE* LONG ENOUGH!

THERE *SHOULD* BE ANOTHER *BODY*-- SEARCH THE BRUSH! HE MUST HAVE BEEN THROWN FROM THE CAR...

NUTS!! IF THEY FIND ME, I'M *DEAD*--

UNLESS... YEA!!

LOOK!! IT'S HIM-- HE'S WEARING THE ROCKET-PACK!!

FFWOOSH!

SEVERAL HOURS LATER, AT CLIFF'S HANGAR...

PEEVY, IT'S BEEN ALMOST THREE HOURS!

WE *HAVE* TO CALL THE POLICE, HE COULD BE *HURT* SOMEWHERE!

NA--FROM THE LOOK OF THINGS, HE *WALKED* AWAY... I JUST WISH I KNEW *WHERE!*

YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME, IF I *TOLD* YOU...!

CLIFF!!

WHAT HAPPENED TO *YOU*-?

WHERE HAVE YOU *BEEN*--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT??

YEA--BUT *THIS* THING SURE AIN'T!!

JEEZ!

CLIFF RECOUNTS THE INCREDIBLE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW HOURS, AS BETTY TENDS HIS CUTS AND BRUISES...

...THEN THE ENGINE GAVE OUT ON ME, AND I HAD TA *HOOF* THE LAST TWO MILES!

CLIFF -- YOU'VE *GOT* TO TURN IT OVER TO THE POLICE!

NO, MA'AM! I'M NOT FINISHED WITH IT YET...

...THEY'LL *KILL* YOU TO GET IT!

ALRIGHT... I *WILL!* AND I WON'T BE BACK TO *BOTHER* YOU *ANYMORE!!*

SLAM!

THEN THAT'S A RISK I'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE...

BUT--

AW, LET UP ON ME, WILL'YA?

HEY-! JUST A *SEC*-

CLIFF, DON'T BE *STUPID*-- IF THOSE *NAZI'S* FIND YOU...

I SAID, WAIT A MINUTE!

C'MERE!!

NO!! YOU LET GO OF ME, CLIFF SECORD!

NOT TILL YOU SIMMER DOWN! NOW LOOK... THERE'S A REASON--

PEEVY TOLD ME! YOU'RE GOING TO USE IT IN THE AIR-CIRCUS--FOR MONEY! HOW CAN YOU, CLIFF?

--A MAN'S BEEN KILLED! WHAT ARE YOU THINKING OF??

I'M THINKIN' OF US! I'M NOT GONNA LOSE YOU TA SOME HOY-FELOY JUST 'CAUSE HE'S GOT MORE SCRATCH THAN ME!

GROW UP, CLIFF! IT'S NOT MONEY-- I'VE TOLD YOU! YOU CAN'T OWN ME!

ONCE I DO THIS ACT, I'LL BE ABLE TA GIVE YOU ANYTHING HE CAN...

YOU'VE GOT TO LET ME LIVE MY OWN LIFE!

AS FOR MARCO, HE'S HELPING ME WITH MY CAREER-- THAT'S ALL! SO, STOP DRAGGING HIM INTO IT! NOW GET SMART AND GET RID OF THAT THING!

...SO, WE CAN GET BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK... OKAY?

AAAH... DON'T WORRY! I'LL DO THE RIGHT THING!

I'LL BE COUNTING ON YOU, HONEY! DON'T GET CRAZY...

THE NEXT MORNING...

EXTRA
Los Angeles Times
RACE RESULTS
ROCKETEER ESCAPES FBI DRAGNET!
AGENT KILLED

THIS JUST HIT THE STREETS--I FIGGERED YOU'D BETTER SEE IT! LISTEN, CLIFF--IF I WAS YOU--

I KNOW, PEEV!

...YOU'D GET *RID* OF THE ROCKET-PACK AS *FAST* AS YOU COULD.

NOW YER TALKIN'!

EXTRA ROCKETEER FBI DRAGNET

WHICH IS JUST WHAT I'M GONNA DO!

BETTY WAS RIGHT, I'D *BETTER* GET OUT, WHILE I STILL *CAN!*

...BUT BEFORE I DO--SEE IF THERE'S ANY WAY YOU CAN *FIX* IT!

EHHH... WELL, I'LL GIVE IT A SHOT!

...BUT *NO* GUARANTEES! IT'S A PRETTY ADVANCED PIECE'A GOODS!

OKAY!--WELL, GOTTA GO SPAR WITH THE BOSS!

YEA... GIVE 'IM A *JAB* FER ME!

NOW, *WHY* DO I GET THE FEELIN' HE'S FEEDIN' ME A BUNCH'A *SOAP?*

SUMPTHIN' TELLS ME I *SHOULDN'T* BE *DOIN'* THIS!

SHORTLY, AT THE SITE OF THE AIR SHOW, PREPARATIONS ARE UNDERWAY FOR THE DAY'S EVENTS.

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH THAT *FOUL-UP* WITH MALCOLM *COST* ME?? HE *DESTROYED* A WATER-TOWER!!

SO *WHY* IS THAT MY FAULT??

BECAUSE, IT *WOULDN'T* HAVE *HAPPENED*, IF *YOU* HAD BEEN DOING YOUR *JOB--!*

WHICH REMINDS ME, *WHY WEREN'T YOU??*

I *TOLD* YA--I HAD *ENGINE TROUBLE!*

R273V

BULLROAR! YOU THINK I'M GONNA BUY THAT?

ALRIGHT THEN, HOW ABOUT THE "FLYING MAN", HUH? THINK HOW MUCH DOUGH AN ACT LIKE THAT COULD MAKE!

PROBABLY A BUNDLE-- BUT HE'S WANTED! AND BESIDES, NOBODY KNOWS WHO HE--SAY! DO YOU KNOW WHO HE IS?

I MIGHT.

THE PHONE RINGS...

WELL, C'MON-- SPILL!!

ANSWER YOUR PHONE!

HELLO! HUH--? OH, YEH, HE'S STANDING RIGHT HERE!

...FOR YOU!

PEEV? WHAT'S COOKIN'?

TROUBLE! YOU GOT THREE GORILLAS GOIN' OVER YER HANGAR--PROBABLY LOOKIN' FER "YOU-KNOW-WHAT"! I SNUCK OUT THE BACK WITH IT, JUST IN TIME! YA BETTER HI-TAIL IT BACK HERE, PRONTO!

NOW... WHAT ABOUT THIS FLYING MAN--?

LATER, BOSS!

SECORD-- SECORD!! COME BACK HERE-- I'M NOT THROUGH WITH YOU YET!!

YOU'VE GOT A SHOW IN TWENTY MINUTES!!

OFFICE

IF YOU RUN OUT ON ME AGAIN-- YOU'RE THROUGH, BUSTER!!

SKEETS--GANGWAY! I NEED THAT CAR!!

SECORD-- YOU BUM!!

HEY! GET OUTTA THERE!! WHAT'RE--

SORRY, PAL -- IT'S AN EMERGENCY!

SKEETS MORAN
LOOP KING

YOU'RE FIRED!! YOU HEAR ME-- FIRED!!

BUT CLIFF IS OBLIVIOUS AS HE ROARS OFF TOWARD HIS HANGAR!

SUDDENLY, A SEDAN *BURSTS* OUT OF THE HANGAR!

...AND SPEEDS AWAY--REVEALING...

MINUTES LATER...

YEOW!!

BLAM BLAM

BETTY--! OH NO!!

I DON'T SEE A *CAR*... GUESS THEY LAMMED!

HOW IN-?

CLIFF-- SECURITY'S GONNA HEAD 'EM OFF AT THE GATE!

SHE MUST'A BEEN *INSIDE*-- WAITIN' FOR *ME*! I'VE GOTTA *DO* SOMETHIN' *QUICK*- OR IT'S ALL--

I'M GOIN' *AFTER 'EM!*

BUT *HOW?*

...YA *CAN'T* FLY--*

OHHH, YES, I CAN-- PEEVY, ROLL OUT THE *BULLDOG!*

IN SECONDS...

BUT *CLIFF*-- =PUF-PUF= THIS THING'S A FLYING *COFFIN!* YOU SAID SO, *YOURSELF!*

IT NEARLY *SHOOK* ITSELF *APART* LAST TIME...!

I *KNOW.*

...BUT THOSE *GOONS* HAVE GOT *BETTY!* IF IT WEREN'T FOR *ME*, SHE WOULDN'T BE *IN* THIS JAM!!

LOOK, CLIFF, I KNOW HOW YA FEEL, BUT...

YEA? THEN PROP ME!

CONTACT!

C'MON, CLIFF-- EASY DOES IT! EASY...

WITH A STUBBORN ROAR--

--THE FAT LITTLE PLANE *LEAPS* INTO THE AIR!

...WHILE A SHORT DISTANCE AHEAD, THE SEDAN'S *EXIT* HAS BEEN CUT-OFF!

GUARDS-- THEY HAVE THE GATES *BLOCKED!*

HEAD FOR THE *FRONT* GATE!

SCREEEEE

QUICK-- TURN THE CAR *AROUND!*

WE CAN SLIP OUT WITH THE CROWDS LEAVING THE AIR-SHOW!

THAT *NOISE*-- IT'S GETTING *LOUDER!* I--

GOTT!!

YAAAAH!

AT THE LAST SECOND, CLIFF PULLS BACK...

BINGO! GOT 'EM!

POKK!

HE CLIMBS, IN A WIDE ARC...

NOW, FOR THE *FINISH!*

DRIVE FASTER, YOU FOOL!! HE'S CIRCLING-- *COMING BACK!!*

ROUNDING A CORNER, THE CAR *BURSTS* THROUGH A BARRIER-- AND STRAIGHT INTO THE *AIR-SHOW!*

WHA--WELL, *HERE'S* A SURPRISE, FOLKS-- *CLIFF SECORD,* IN THE INFAMOUS *"BLIND BULLDOG"!!*

GET THAT *CAR* OFF THE FIELD!!

HE'S GOING TO *KILL* US!

I SAID *FASTER!!*

WHO SAYS "BIGELOW'S AIR CIRCUS DOESN'T GIVE YOU MORE FOR YOUR MONEY"? LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I DON'T QUITE KNOW WHAT TO CALL THIS ACT...BUT IT SURE LOOKS LIKE FUN FROM HERE!

WATCH OUT, YOU FOOL-- WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?!?!

OTTO--I-- I HAFF GLASS IN MY EYE!

WE CAN'T OUT-RACE THAT PLANE-- I'M GOING TO SHOOT IT DOW-=URRK!!

=UMMFF!= YOU LITTLE TRAMP! I'LL CUT YOU UP GOOD FOR THAT!!

...AFTER WE'VE FIXED YOUR BOYFRIEND!

I MUST'A GOT THE DRIVER--HE'S STEERIN' WILD! NOW I CAN BOX 'EM IN!!

5

WHATTA SHOW, FOLKS-- WHATTA SHOW!!

I'VE GOT 'EM NOW!

THE SPECTATORS WATCH IN *STUNNED* SILENCE-- AS CLIFF *BEARS DOWN* ON THE SPEEDING AUTO!

BULLSEYE! HE PLOWED *RIGHT* INTO THE *HAY*- THAT OUGHTTA HOLD 'EM FOR ME!

BAM

NOW TO *LAND* THIS BABY--

AN' HOPE TO *GOD*, BETTY AIN'T *HURT!*

THAT *CRAZY*- MAN TRIED TO *KILL* US!!

OKAY-OKAY! NOW SETTLE DOWN, BUD!

HEY--SOMEBODY GRAB THOSE GUYS!!

THERE'S A *DAME* BACK HERE-- *ALL TIED-UP!!*

HURRY! WE MUST *LOSE* OURSELVES IN THE CROWD!

IN MINUTES, CLIFF APPEARS...

BETTY!!

CLIFF-- THEY GOT *AWAY!* THEY--

NEVERMIND--ARE *YOU* ALRIGHT?

Y-YEA! OH, CLIFF, YOU'VE *GOT* TO GET *RID* OF THAT THING! *PLEASE--*

I *AM*-- IT'S ALREADY SETTLED! EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE *FINE*... YOU'LL SEE!

SO! HE IS THE ONE WE *SEEK!*

I WILL TELL OTTO! WE *MUST* REGAIN THAT DEVICE-- AND THIS TIME, *NOTHING* MUST STOP US--*NOTHING!!*

NEXT CHAPTER!
THE THIRD PARTY!

ONE FIVE
LINE NO.
CALL RALF

PG 1.

ON A DARKENED ROOM, A STRANGE TABLEAU UNFOLDS...

THE SERUM IS TAKING EFFECT.

GOOD--NOW WE'LL FIND OUT A FEW THINGS!

WHERE ARE YOUR FELLOW AGENTS?

WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

WERNER GUPTMANN.

WHAT IS YOUR MISSION HERE?

TO STEAL THE PLANS AND PROTOTYPE MODEL FOR THE "CIRRUS X-3" ROCKET ENGINE, AND RETURN WITH IT TO ***BERLIN***...

IN HIDING. WE WERE TO MEET AT CLOVER FIELD AIRBASE TO TRANSPORT THE DEVICE.

HOW?

...BY STEALING ONE OF THE NEW ***PLANES***-- IT IS ALL PREARRANGED.

WHERE IS THE ROCKET-PACK ***NOW?***

WE NO LONGER HAVE IT. OUR CARRIERS WERE TAKEN BY THE LOCAL POLICE... AND IT WAS LEFT IN A HANGAR AT CHAPLIN AIRFIELD.

SO, THIS PERSON--THE NEWSPAPERS CALL THE "ROCKETEER"--

HE'S ***NOT*** ONE OF YOUR AGENTS?

NO. HE IS AN AMERICAN FLIER...

HIS NAME?

CLIFF SECORD.

THE ROCKETEER™

BY Dave Stevens

— Chapter —

4

SO WHAT'S IT TODAY, SUGAR-- GIRL TROUBLE AGAIN?

UH-UH...NAW,-- I JUST GOT ***BOUNCED*** FROM THE AIR-CIRCUS!

TAMALE

TOASTED SANDWICH 15¢

45¢ QT. 25¢ PT. 5¢

ICE CREAM

AW, ***CLIFF***--YOU WERE THE LAST PERSON I KNEW, WHO HAD A STEADY ***JOB***! WHAT HAPPENED?

LONG STORY-- ANYWAY, IT WAS MY ***OWN*** FAULT!

GEE, WHAT'CHA GONNA DO ***NOW***?

MILLIE, I WISH I KNEW!

HEY, I KNOW! WHY DON'TCHA TRY STUNT-FLYING FOR THE MOVIE STUDIOS?

NAA--BAD IDEA! I TRIED IT ONCE--I DON'T MIX WELL WITH THOSE HOLLYWOOD TYPES!

HMPH! YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS 'CAUSE THEY'VE GOT MONEY...

AND YOU DON'T!

BALONEY!! I JUST PLAIN DON'T LIKE 'EM! THEY THINK THEY CAN BUY AND SELL ANYBODY!

...WHICH REMINDS ME...

...I GOTTA MAKE A PHONE CALL-- SEE'YA!

HURRY BACK!

BETTY? HOW 'BOUT GOIN' FOR A SPIN?

NO, I'D LOVE TO CLIFF, BUT I'M... GOING TO BE TIED UP THIS AFTERNOON!

DON'T TELL ME-- MORE "ART-PHOTOS"?

CLIFF, DON'T--WE'VE BEEN ALL THROUGH THAT!

WHY DON'T YOU CALL ME BACK TONIGHT? OKAY?

I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.

NUTS! OF ALL THE DAMES IN THIS TOWN, WHY'D I HAVE'TA FALL FOR HER?! NEVER 'ROUND WHEN I REALLY NEED HER-- ALWAYS GETTIN' HERSELF INTO TROUBLE...

...TAKIN' OFF HER CLOTHES FOR THAT FLAKEY-CREEP PHOTOGRAPHER!

I'LL BET HE'S THERE RIGHT NOW! BOY, I'D LOVE TO PIN HIS EARS BACK....!

JUST THINKIN' ABOUT HIM GIVES ME A RASH!

AAH....! MIGHT AS WELL GO SEE HOW PEEV'S DOIN' WITH THE PACK.

AFTER A SHORT DRIVE TO PEEVY'S...

WELL, HOW'S IT COMIN'?

JUST FINISHED IT UP! AS IT TURNS OUT, I DIDN'T HAVE'TA DO ALL THAT MUCH...

LOOKS LIKE YOU DID *PLENTY!*

EHHH...NOT REALLY, THE STABILIZER RINGS WERE TOTALLED, SO I HAD'TA PULL 'EM--AN' THIS IS WHAT I SUBSTITUTED!

FINS, HUH?

YUP!

SPELLS *'MOTHER'* TO ME!

YEA--THE PLACEMENT MIGHT BE A LITTLE OFF, BUT I FIGGERED THEY'D GIVE YA MORE CONTROL, STEERING-WISE!

BUT *STEERING* ISN'T THE *PROBLEM*--IT'S *SPEED!* THE DANGED THING TAKES OFF LIKE A *SHOT!* IT NEARLY DROVE ME RIGHT *THROUGH* MALCOLM'S WING!

AN' TRYIN' TO *LAND* IS NEXT TO *IMPOSSIBLE!!*

WELL, IF YOU'DA READ THESE *PLANS* A LITTLE CLOSER, LIKE WITH *BOTH* EYES--IT WOULD'A BEEN A WHOLE LOT EASIER! SEE THIS? "THRUST CONTROL"!

IT SAYS:"LAUNCHING THRUST; DEPRESS STUDS--*ONCE*"!

CLIK

HALF-THRUST: PRESS 'EM *TWICE!*

CLIK CLIK

YOU ONLY PRESSED 'EM *ONCE*, MID-FLIGHT, WHICH CUTS *OFF* THE POWER!

GIMME THAT *HAND-GRIP!*

NOW, AFTER YER AT *HALF*-THRUST--PRESS 'EM *AGAIN*, AN' IT'S SWITCHED OFF! NOW YOU'VE SLOWED DOWN TO WHERE YA CAN *LAND*--BUT NOT ON YER *FACE* LIKE *LAST* TIME! SEE THIS SWITCH?

HUH! SOMETHIN' ELSE I MISSED! WHAT IS IT?

GYRO-CONTROL!

FLIP THE SWITCH AFTER THE ENGINE'S OFF--AN' *INSTANT* BALANCE!

YOU'LL LAND ON YER FEET EVERY TIME--JUST LIKE A *CAT!*

YOU GIVE A *GREAT* SALES PITCH, PEEV! HOW'BOUT A QUICK TEST-FLIGHT BEFORE I HAND IT OVER?

PEEVY GRUDGINGLY AGREES TO A "***TEST-FLIGHT***"--AND DRIVES CLIFF TO A GRASSY FIELD BEYOND THE AIR-STRIP...

NOW REMEMBER WHAT I ***TOLD*** YA, UP THERE...

YES, MOTHER!

WATCH IT...

WHAT A KICK!! THIS BEATS ***EVERY-THING! NOTHIN'*** CAN TOUCH ME HERE... I'M ***NEVER*** GIVIN' THIS UP!

YAHOO!! LOOK'A ***ME,*** WORLD-- CLIFF SECORD... THE ***FIRST FLYING-MAN!!***

LOOK PEEV, I'M NOT GOIN' OFF ***HALF-COCKED*** THIS TIME! I ***KNOW*** WHAT I'M DOIN'!

THAT'S WHAT SCARES ME...

WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, CLIFF PRESSES THE STUDS...AND THE ***ROCKETEER SHOOTS SKYWARD!***

NOW, LET'S SEE... ***HALF-THRUST!*** ***HEY***--THIS ***DOES*** SLOW IT DOWN!

NOW, SWITCH ***OFF!*** AND...

...GYRO- ***WOAH!!***

LET YER FEET DROP, OR YER GONNA ***ROLL***--!

EEOWF!!

YOU ***LAMEBRAIN!!*** WHAT'SAMATTER WITH YOU?? YA TRYIN' TA ***WRECK*** IT AGAIN??

AFTER GETTING AN *EARFUL* FROM PEEVY, CLIFF RETURNS HOME... EMPTY-HANDED!

BOY--PEEV SURE IS *MAD!* I DIDN'T FIGURE ON HIM WANTIN' TO KEEP IT *THERE!* HMMPH...

YOU'D THINK HE DIDN'T *TRUST* ME!

CLIFF SECORD?

WE'D LIKE A FEW WORDS WITH YOU...

THIS IS *MY* PLACE, AND YOU'RE *TRESSPASSIN'!* SO CLEAR OUT--*WHOEVER* YOU ARE, BEFORE I CALL THE *COPS!*

...ABOUT THE ROCKET PACK!

SUCH AS: WHERE IS IT?

HEY, *WAIT* A MINUTE!

...CAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOU-:*

STOW IT! WE GOT *NO* TIME FER THAT *HOKUM!* NOW, EITHER YOU COME CLEAN-- OR I'M GONNA MAKE *HAMBURGER* OUTTA YOU! *SAVVY??*

I'M AFRAID MY ASSOCIATE *MEANS* WHAT HE SAYS, AND WE'RE RATHER PRESSED FOR TIME, SO...

I GOT *NOTHIN'* TO SAY TO YOU *THUGS-*:OOF!:

WHO YOU CALLIN' A *THUG?!*

WE REPRESENT THE OWNER AND *INVENTOR!*

:COUGH: OKAY--IT'S NOT HERE! I TOOK A *SPILL* WITH IT, SO MY PAL'S DOIN' SOME *REPAIR*-WORK ON IT, OVER AT HIS PLACE!

AND THE PLANS...?

HE'S GOT IT *ALL!*

HERE'S THE ADDRESS...

211 Argyle Apt. 8

HE ANSWERS TO "*PEEVY*"!

FINE-- ONLY YOU'RE COMIN' ALONG, *SONNY!*

SOON, ENROUTE TO PEEVY'S...

DOWN-TOWN TRAFFIC... THIS IS MY *ONE* CHANCE!

THAT STREET-CAR...

IF I CAN JUST TIME THIS RIGHT-- *NOW!!*

HEY!

YOU CRAZY?!

BLAZES-- HE'S *GONE!!* *WHAT* KIND'A HOUDINI--?

I WAS EXPECTING THIS...

...HE'LL WARN HIS *PAL*-- WE'LL HAVE TO *STEP* ON IT!

YAAAA!

HOLY--

SCREECH

ON MINUTES...

WAIT'LL I GIT MY *MITTS* ON 'IM!

THIS IS IT--*EIGHT!*

SHHH! LISTEN--

8

WE'LL HAVE TO WRAP IT UP-- I'VE GOT TO GET GOING!

IT'S *HIM*--HE *BEAT* US HERE!

WELL... WHAT ARE YOU *WAITING* FOR?

NUTHIN'!

BAM

GOOD HEAVENS!

WOW!

WH-WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS? WHO ARE YOU??

WE'LL ASK THE QUESTIONS, MR. PEEVY!

AND I'LL START WITH YOU...!

...MY, WHAT AN ENCHANTIN' PERFUME!

PEEVY?!! I'M MARCO--OF HOLLYWOOD!

...AND YOU HAVE JUST BROKEN INTO THIS YOUNG LADY'S APARTMENT... AND RUINED MY SHOOTING!

MARCO, WAIT--!

YOU SAID "PEEVY"? WHO GAVE YOU THIS ADDRESS?

HUH?

HOLY CROW!! WHAT A COUPLE OF PRIZE CHUMPS WE ARE--

HE BONED US! AN' WE WENT FOR IT!! AWWG--!

I'LL TEAR HIS ARMS OFF! I'LL--!

AFTER I'M THROUGH WITH HIM!

BEGGING YOUR PARDON, MISS... BUT YOU SEEM TO KNOW THE MAN WE'RE AFTER!

ALL TOO WELL!

AND HIS... TRUE ADDRESS?

WITH PLEASURE!

MY THANKS! WE'LL SEE THAT YOUR DOOR IS REPLACED!

TOODLE-OO!

COME ALONG, MISANTHROPE!

BACK AT PEEVY'S..

AWRIGHT, YOU... THAT WAS **BETTY**--AN' SHE WAS **HOPPIN' MAD!** TWO **PALOOKAS** JUST BUSTED INTA HER PLACE, LOOKIN' FER **ME**-- AN', WELL...

...THEY CAUGHT 'ER IN THE **ALT'GETHER!!**

HAH!! AW-HAW-HAW! SERVES HER RIGHT! OHH--I **WISH** I COULD'A SEEN IT! **HAW...**

WELL, YER GONNA GET YER CHANCE...

...'CAUSE SHE SENT 'EM OVER **HERE** ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES AGO!

WHAT?!

THAT MEANS THEY'LL **BE** HERE ANY **SEC--**

--I GOTTA GET THIS STUFF **OUTTA** HERE!!

HEY!! COME **BACK** HERE WITH THAT--

--YOU SAID YOU WAS **TURNIN' IT IN!!**

NOT TA **THEM,** I AIN'T!

ARE YOU **AMBROSE PEABODY?**

OPEN UP!!

BAM BAM BAM

I KNEW IT-- I **KNEW** IT!!

WHO'S ASKIN'?

WE'VE COME FOR THE *ROCKET-PACK*-- LET'S *HAVE* IT!

AN' *NO* BALONEY!

EHH, WELL...

...I WISH I COULD OBLIGE YA- BUT *CLIFF* JUST TOOK *OFF* WITH IT!

=*EYAAH!*= NOBODY MAKES A MONKEY'A *ME* LIKE THIS-- *NOBODY!!*

EXCEPTING *YOURSELF!* ...WELL, HE'S *ACED* US FOR NOW-- WE'D BETTER GET DOWN TO CLOVER FIELD!

PEEVY IS LED OUTSIDE, TO HIS CAR...

C'MON, POPS-- *MOVE* IT!

...AN' *NO* FUNNY STUFF! WE'LL BE *RIGHT* BEHIND YA!

HEY-- WHAT'S *THIS??*

INSURANCE!

CLIK

C'MON--GET THAT HEAP *MOVIN'!*

WHA--YOU *JERK!* WHAT'D YA HIDE IN *HERE* FOR??

SHHH-! HOW WAS I S'POSED TA KNOW?

AIN'T YOU *HEARIN'* ME?!

UH--*YEA!* --BUT WHY *CLOVER-FIELD?*

WE GOTTA BE ON HAND FOR THE TRIAL FLIGHT OF DOUGLAS'S NEW EXPERIMENTAL PLANE... "THE *LOCUST!*"

MAJOR-- MAJOR!

WHAT'S THE TROUBLE?

IN *HERE*... *HURRY!!*

I *SWEAR* I DON'T KNOW *HOW* IT HAPPENED, *SIR!*

GOOD LORD-- THE PILOTS!!

THEN *WHO'S* FLYING THE--?

SOON, PEEVY AND HIS UNWANTED ESCORT ARRIVE...

.OVER
FIELD -

COLONEL, YOU'RE TO CALL IN *IMMEDIATELY!*

AWRIGHT--YOU TAKE THAT GUY'S CAR KEYS, AFTER HE PULLS IN!

THIS IS COLONEL MAY-HUH? *WHAT???!*

DAD-BLAST IT!! DOES THE BOSS KNOW?--LOOK, DON' LET *NOBODY* TOUCH *NOTHIN'*--

WE'RE ON OUR WAY!

THOSE NAZI'S--THEY'VE *HIJACKED* THE LOCUST!! YOU--*SOLDIER!*

YESSIR?

MAKE SURE *NOBODY* LEAVES BY THIS GATE!

WAIT--WHAT ABOUT *HIM?*

HE AIN'T GOIN' *NOPLACE!* C'MON-- *TROMP* ON IT, SHYSTER! WE GOT A REAL *MESS* ON OUR HANDS!!

WOW... DID 'JA HEAR THAT?

I HATE TA BE THE ONE TA SAY IT--BUT **YOU** COULD PROB'LY **STOP** THAT HIJACK!

WHAT?! ARE YOU **CRAZY?** I COULD GET **KILLED** TOO--

SO? YA BEEN PUTTIN' YER NECK ON THE LINE **EVERYDAY** FER THAT **AIR-CIRCUS**--WHERE'S THE DIFFERENCE?

I GET **PAID** TO DO THAT...**NOBODY'S** PAYIN' ME TO GET **SHOT** AT! THESE MUGS'VE GOT **GUNS!**

OHH... **GUNS!** GEE, AN' I'LL BET THEY'RE **DEAD-SHOTS,** TOO...

TELL YA WHAT-- REACH UNDER YER SEAT!

YOU GOT **HOOCH?**

WHA--A **MAUSER!!** SAY...**WHERE'D** YOU GET THIS??

NONE O' YER **BEESWAX**-- NOW, LISTEN **GOOD,** YOU...

...WE'RE IN A **HEAP** A' TROUBLE HERE!

AN' **I** AIN'T PLANNIN' TA SPEND THE REST A' **MY** LIFE BEHIND **BARS!** NOW I FIGGER WE GOT **ONE** WAY OUT--

--IF YOU **SHOW** 'EM YOU AIN'T NO CROOK--BY **SAVIN'** THAT PLANE!

YOUR **THIEVERY** HAS COST ME ALOT OF TIME AND TROUBLE-- IT ENDS **HERE!**

OH, THAT'S A **SWELL** IDEA--SUPPOSIN' I GET **CROAKED?!**

THEN I S'POSE **BETTY'LL** BE LOOKIN' FER A NEW FELLA... MAYBE THAT PHOTOGRAPHER?

:PEW!: THANKS FOR **REMINDIN'** ME! THAT'S THE WHOLE REASON I **KEPT** THIS **DANGED** THING IN THE **FIRST** PLACE! 'LOTTA **GOOD** IT DID ME...

MISTER SECORD, THIS HAS GONE ON LONG ENOUGH!

MY **MACHINE,** GENTLEMEN!

NEXT : THE **FINAL** CHAPTER...

"ROCKET'S RED GLARE"

THE ROCKETEER™

By
Dave Stevens

Chapter 5

OUT OF THE CAR, SECORD!

AND DON'T REACH FOR THE GUN...

...THAT WOULD BE A MISTAKE!

OKAY, OKAY! NO NEED TA GET SORE... I'M COMIN' OUT!

MOMENT OF TRUTH, KID-- DON'T **BLOW** IT!

I'LL ONLY SAY IT **ONCE**--HAND OVER THE ROCKET-PACK! I HAVEN'T A MOMENT TO SPARE!

I AM!

DON'T TELL ME-- YOU'RE GOIN' AFTER THE **LOCUST** WITH IT!

CAUSE ME ANY FURTHER DELAY, AND I'LL PERSONALLY SEE THAT YOUR INCARCERATION IS *PERMANENT!*

YOU MEAN-- LIFE?!

USE YER BEAN, CLIFF-- *I* DON'T WANNA DO NO TIME!

GO ON... *SHOW* 'IM YOU AIN'T NO CROOK...

BY GOIN' AFTER THAT PLANE MYSELF? MAYBE I OUGHTA... I *GOTTA* SQUARE THINGS *SOMEHOW!*

...WHILE I KEEP 'IM *COVERED!*

PEEV! DON'T--

IN A BLUR OF MOTION, THE STRANGER'S HAND LASHES OUT, WRENCHING THE GUN FROM PEEVY'S GRASP--!

...AND SPURRING CLIFF TO SUDDEN ACTION!

SO LONG, BOYS! GOT A *PLANE* TA CATCH!

SECORD--!

--NO!!

GERONIMOooo!

I HAVE HIM IN MY *SIGHTS*, SIR! PERMISSION TO FIRE--

NO--NO NEED! HE WON'T GET FAR! CALL THE TOWER--HAVE THEM READY A *PURSUIT* PLANE, IMMEDIATELY!

PEABODY...I DON'T SUPPOSE EITHER OF YOU GAVE A THOUGHT TO CHECKING THE *FUEL SUPPLY* IN THE "CIRRUS X-3"?

FUEL SUP--*

MINUTES LATER, HIGH ABOVE THE CITY, CLIFF RACES THROUGH THE CLOUDS, UNAWARE OF ANYTHING BUT...

THE *LOCUST!* MOVIN' AT A GOOD CLIP TOO! IT'LL TAKE SOME DOIN' TO CATCH 'ER!

BUT I *GOTTA!*

HEY! WHAT THE *HECK*--?! I'M SLOWIN' DOWN!

THIS IS *NUTS!* FEELS LIKE THE ENGINE'S CUT OUT ON ME--I CAN'T GET ANY *POWER!*

OH LORD... *NO!*

...I'M GOING INTO *FREEFALL!!*

MEANWHILE, AT CLOVERFIELD, THE ROCKET-PACK'S ***INVENTOR*** PREPARES A P-26 FOR TAKE-OFF...

IT'S A LONG SHOT-- ONE IN A MILLION!

YEAH, BUT IF ***ANYBODY*** CAN DO IT...

...***HE*** CAN!

YOU TWO STAY BY THE CONTROL RADIO-- I'LL KEEP MY MIKE ON!

GOTCHA!

BLAST THAT SECORD! WHY WON'T HE GIVE IT UP? HE HAS ***NOTHING*** TO GAIN FROM THIS--HE'LL ONLY END UP ***KILLING*** HIMSELF, POINTLESSLY!

AAAH! HE'S A SAP, I TELL YA...

...TH' SQUIRRELS CALL 'IM ***BROTHER!***

PURSUIT-ONE TO TOWER...

...I'M CLEAR, AND TAKING HER UP TO 5,000 FT!

I SHOULD HAVE HIM IN SIGHT MOMENTARILY.

AND HOW!

WE READ YOU--GOOD LUCK!

THEN, AS THE SPEEDING PLANE BREAKS THROUGH THE CLOUDS...

HOLD ON! I SEE HIM--HE'S ALREADY IN ***FREEFALL!***

LOOKS LIKE IT'S NOW OR ***NEVER!***

THE LITTLE PLANE BANKS AND DIVES TOWARD THE PLUMMETING FIGURE...

SWITCHING TO LOUDSPEAKER!

SECORD!! I'M GOING TO PASS UNDER YOU! IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, I WANT YOU TO REACH OUT FOR MY RIGHT WING!

W-WHAT?? IS HE NUTS?! HE'LL CHOP ME TO BITS!

IN SECONDS, THE PLANE OVERTAKES CLIFF... THEN PACES HIM!

H-HE DID IT--!

HE'S COMIN' UP, UNDER-NEATH ME!

DON'T--

--LET ME--

MISS--

YOU'VE GOT IT! NOW HUG IT TIGHT!

OOOF!

I-I MADE IT-- I'M ALIVE! I'M ALIVE!!

SECORD! THE ROCKET-PACK'S USELESS NOW--

--IT'S OUT OF FUEL! I'M YOUR ONLY TICKET DOWN... SO WE DO THINGS MY WAY!

UNDERSTOOD?

WHATEVER YOU SAY, PAL--I GOT NO BEEFS!

WHILE SOMEWHERE BELOW...

MARCO, PLEASE... I HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO THINK!

SO, THINK ON THE PLANE! LISTEN, MY PET... YOU *NEED* THIS TRIP! YOU'VE BEEN TOO NERVOUS LATELY. A CHANGE OF SCENERY IS IN ORDER!

BUT *EUROPE*-- IT'S SO FAR! WE'D BE GONE FOR *WEEKS!*

AND *WHAT'S* SO IMPORTANT, THAT YOU CAN'T LEAVE? HMM...?

WELL... NOTHING, REALLY...

THEN IT'S SETTLED! OUR FLIGHT LEAVES IN THE MORNING!

WELL, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? START PACKING! I'LL BE BY FOR YOU LATER TONIGHT!

ALRIGHT.

HMM... I'D HOPED TO POSTPONE THIS TRIP, UNTIL I'D DECIDED WHAT TO DO ABOUT CLIFF! I'LL JUST HAVE TO TELL HIM I'M VISITING AN AUNT! HE'LL PUT UP A FUSS...

...BUT I *CAN'T* LET HIM FIND OUT ABOUT MARCO! OH, *WHY* DID THIS HAVE TO GET SO COMPLICATED FOR ME?!

...JUST BECAUSE I'M A FEMALE...

"THE KIND MEN LIKE!" *HMPH!*

MEANWHILE, THE PURSUIT PLANE HAS OVERTAKEN THE LOCUST, WITH A BOLD PLAN...

THINK YOU'VE GOT IT STRAIGHT, SECORD?

I'LL ONLY BE ABLE TO MAKE *ONE* PASS OVER HER...

I'LL TIP MY WING AS CLOSE AS I CAN, THEN YOU GRAB FOR THE LADDER-RUNGS--FROM THERE, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN!

I DON'T LIKE THIS--NOT ONE *BIT!*

...SO YOU'VE *GOT* TO MAKE IT COUNT!

AS THE WING DESCENDS, CLIFF SLOWLY REACHES ONE HAND OUT...

GOTTA BE *CAREFUL...*

...OR THIS WIND'LL TEAR ME RIGHT OFF!

C'MON! JUST A LITTLE LOWER...

THUMP

SOMETHING STRUCK US... FROM *ABOVE!*

I'LL GO BACK AND CHECK!

AN ARMY PLANE!!

THE LOCUST SUDDENLY BANKS HARD...

YEOWW!! THEY'RE TRYIN' TA SHAKE ME OFF!

WIND'S TEARIN' AT ME--GOTTA GET THIS BLAMED DOOR OPEN!!

CLIK

AHH! THAT'S IT...

OTTO--I'M WORRIED! THAT ARMY PLANE MAY HAVE ATTACHED AN EXPLOSIVE TO THE OUTSIDE OF THE SHIP...

NO--THEY WOULD NEVER--

HOLD--THERE IS A NOISE!

...ONE GOOD YANK OUGHTA DO IT!

WOOSHAH

WHAT DID YOU FIND?! HEINRICH--

ANSWER ME!!

HEINRICH?? WHAT WAS IT?

GEEZ!! I HOPE THAT WASN'T THE PILOT!

YOU!!

YEA, *ME!* NOW SHUT YER BEAK, AN' LAND THIS THING-- OR SO HELP ME...

I'LL VENTILATE YOUR HEAD, RIGHT HERE!!

YOU MAY KILL ME IF YOU WISH, BUT I WILL *NOT* LAND THIS PLANE! IT GOES TO THE FATHER-LAND...

...OR IT GOES DOWN IN *FLAMES!*

NAGHH!

THEN GET OUTTA THAT CHAIR!!

FOOL!! YOU SHOULD HAVE *SHOT* ME WHILE YOU HAD THE CHANCE!

:OOOF!:

DIE, SWINE!!

AND--ONCE YOU ARE *DEAD*--

"...MY FÜHRER WILL HAVE BOTH THE LOCUST, *AND* YOUR PRECIOUS *ROCKET-PACK!*"

PURSUIT-ONE TO TOWER-- SITUATION LOOKS CRITICAL! THE LOCUST IS OUT OF CONTROL!!

"THERE'S A STRUGGLE IN THE COCKPIT! AND IT LOOKS LIKE-*WAIT!* OUR MAN JUST CONNECTED WITH A *ROUNDHOUSE* PUNCH!"

SO MUCH FOR THE *FATHER-LAND!*

CLIFF TAKES THE PILOT'S SEAT...

MAYDAY-- MAYDAY!! ARE YOU STILL OUT THERE?! COME ON, BROTHER...

GET ON THAT MIKE, AND TELL ME HOW TA *LAND* THIS CRAZY THING--!

TAKE IT EASY, SECORD--PULL YOUR NOSE UP, AND LEVEL OFF!

I'LL TALK YOU DOWN THE REST OF THE WAY!

BUT THE WORDS NEVER REACH CLIFF'S EARS...

REPEAT-- MAYDAY! I'M NOT RECEIVING YOU...

WOOA!!

MY RADIO MUST BE OUT! *NUTS--HOW* AM I GONNA LAND IT *NOW??*

GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE'TA AIM FOR THE GROUND...

...AN' MAKE A *WISH!!*

SECORD...? *SECORD!!*

DAVE STEVENS

HE'S RIDING IT DOWN!!

HE'S GONNA PLOW UP HALF OF BEVERLY HILLS!

LET'S MOVE!

MAN, I SHOULD'A SEEN THIS COMIN'!

AMBULANCE

LANDING GEAR'S DROPPIN' DOWN-- BUT SO IS THE NOSE!

GOTTA BRING IT UP--!

EYOWW!

ON IMPACT, THE LANDING GEAR SNAPS--AND THE LOCUST CATAPULTS INTO THE STREETS LIKE A GIANT RAGING BEAST!

GET OUTTA TH' ROAD!!

I CAN'T STOP IT--!

OH NO!!

HARROLD'S

HARROL

COCKTAILS

BUKOOMM

WHAT *IS* IT??

LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND'A *PLANE!*

HARROLDS

HEY! SUMTHIN'S *MOVIN'* INSIDE-- *LOOK!!*

THE GLASS IN THE COCKPIT BEGINS TO HEAVE...

...AND A TATTERED FIGURE PULLS ITSELF FROM THE WRECKAGE...

...RISING UP LIKE A SPECTRE!

LUVVA' PETE--IT'S SOMETHIN' FROM *SPACE!*

NO--WAIT A MINUTE! IT'S THAT GUY IN THE PAPERS--THE *ROCKETEER!*

SAY... WAITER! IS THERE A...

DOCTOR... IN THE... HOUSE...

CLIFF...?

HEY...

WHATT'A YA SAY, KID?

READY TA GO A COUPLE O' ROUNDS WIT' JOE LOUIS?

PEEV? UHH... FEELS LIKE I--JUST DID! WHAT--WHERE ARE WE?

BASE HOSPITAL! AN' YER GONNA *BE* HERE A FEW DAYS, SO GET USED TO IT!

H-HOW BAD OFF AM I?

AAH--YER OKAY! YA BANGED YERSELF UP PRETTY GOOD...BUT YOU'DA BEEN *DEAD* WITHOUT THAT HELMET!

SAY--ARE WE STILL IN A FIX WITH THE LAW?

WELL, THE BIG GUY SAID HE'D GO TA BAT FOR YA...

...BUT WE STILL GOTTA SHOW UP IN *COURT*--THE COPS THINK YA *BUMPED* THAT G-MAN!

NUTS!

HEY, WHAT ABOUT THE ROCKET-PACK--IS IT STILL IN ONE PIECE?

OH, YEA...THEY GOT IT DOWN IN THE LAB...

HENH! I THINK THEY LIKED THOSE FINS I ADDED!

UM, PEEV...? I'D UH--LIKE'TA CALL BETTY--THAT IS...

OH! SURE, KID...

I'LL GO GRAB A COUPLE'A SINKERS...

MY GUT'S BEEN CUSSIN' ME FER AN HOUR ANYWAY!

THANKS, PAL...

H'LLO, BET- HUH? WHO'S THI-* SHE WHAT?!

--I SAID SHE'S LEAVIN' FO' EUROPE, ON A PLANE-- WI' THAT FOREIGN FELLA!

THAT'S MARCO!! OF ALL THE CRUST--! EUROPE! HOW COULD SHE??

LAND'SAKES ALIVE! HE'S AWAKE, AND CAUSING A RUCKUS ALREADY!

WHAT'S THAT? SAILING FROM NEW YORK--BUT WHAT DAY?? I-- OPERATOR--! HELLO?!!

LOOKS LIKE I GOT HERE JUST IN TIME!

NOW, PUT THAT PHONE BACK! ...AND WHERE'S THAT FRIEND OF YOURS? HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE WATCHING YOU!

NOW GIVE ME THAT!

WAIT--I'M TRYIN' TO FIND A GIRL! I GOTTA--

THERE'LL BE PLENTY OF TIME FOR THAT SORT OF THING AFTER YOU'RE RELEASED!

NOW...THIS WON'T HURT A BIT...

I DON'T NEED NO SHOT! I WANNA TALK TO THE DOCTOR!

I GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE!

GAAAAA!!

BULLSEYE! THAT SHOULD SETTLE YOUR HASH FOR A WHILE...

BUT, AS THE NURSE LEAVES, CLIFF BOUNDS FROM THE BED...

OUCH... HOPE THAT OLE' CLUCK AIN'T STANDIN' OUTSIDE THE DOOR!

GOOD! THEY LEFT MY DUDS--BOY, THESE'VE SURE SEEN BETTER DAYS!

WHATTA *MESS!* LOOKS LIKE I GOT HIT BY A *TRAIN!*

AS HE DRESSES, THE TRANQUILIZER BEGINS TO TAKE ITS TOLL...

WHEW! FEELS LIKE SHE SHOT ME FULL'A BATHTUB GIN....!

NOW... WHAT WAS I...

...OH YEA-- THE *LAB!* NOBODY IN SIGHT...

...HOPE I CAN... FIND IT, BEFORE MY...LEGS GIVE OUT--OR THAT *NURSE* SPOTS ME!

GOTTA CATCH UP... TO BETTY-- SHE *CAN'T* LEAVE... WITH *HIM*--!

I OUGHTTA KICK YER CAN INTO THE MIDDLE A' NEXT WEEK!

HE WASN'T GOIN' NOPLACE! I DU*

I *TOLD* YA TA STAY *PUT,* TIL THE NURSE CAME!

CHEM LAB.

BLAZES!! SECORD--!

HEY!

GET OUTTA THERE, YOU! I SAID--

SECORD!! OPEN UP THIS DOOR, 'FORE I *BUST* IT DOWN!

"AIN'T GOIN' *NOPLACE*," HUH, POPS?

C'MON, CLIFF! DON'T BE A SAP...

I GOTTA MOVE QUICK-- HOPE PEEV WAS RIGHT... AHH--*THERE* IT IS!

UNNH!

AGGH- ...DOPE'S MAKIN' ME TOO DIZZY TA STAND!

KISH

HEY-- I HEARD *GLASS* BREAKIN'! MY *BEAKERS*!! *QUICK*...

THERE'S A *FIRE-AXE* DOWN THE HALL-- GO *GET* IT! WE GOTTA *STOP* THIS *NUMSKULL*, 'FORE HE *FRIES* HIMSELF!

:GULP!: UH-SURE THING!

:WHEW: *HEY*-- LOOKS LIKE *FUEL* GOIN' IN FROM THAT BEAKER!

WHATTA BREAK! I SHOULD THANK 'EM... FOR MAKIN' IT SO EASY! "FILL 'ER UP, JOE..."

"...BIG NIGHT TONIGHT!"

WHOOPS-- MISSED! I CAN'T SEEM TA...KEEP MY...EYES OPEN...

SSSSSS

UHHH--C'MON! I CAN'T FOLD UP... NOT NOW!! I'VE GOTTA GET--

--OUT'A HERE!

AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT-- GIMME ROOM!

IT'LL TAKE A FEW GOOD WHACKS TA GET THROUGH THIS DOOR! AN' THEN...

...I'LL PULVERIZE THAT SCRAWNY RUNT!!

NUTS-- HERE THEY COME! UGGH--BETTER SHAKE A LEG, SECORD...

:OOF!: BOY, GETTIN' DIZZY AGAIN...

UH-OW, I'M-- :URRK!:

KRAASH

I'LL MAKE BACON OUT OF 'IM!!

OWW! CAN'T STAY...AWAKE--AN' THEY'LL...BE THROUGH THAT DOOR...ANY SECOND! I GUESS ...TH' JIGG'S UP!

BUT I-- BETTY! I...GOTTA REACH BETTY!

KABOOM!

CLIFF!

SWEET MOTHER U'MERCY...

COVER YER FACE-- CHEMICAL FUMES!

HURRY UP WITH THOSE--

MOVE!!

WITH MUCH EFFORT, THE BLAZE IS FINALLY EXTINGUISHED...

...NOTHIN' LEFT! POOR SAP--PROB'LY NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT 'IM!

HE MUST'A BEEN TRYIN' TA USE THE ROCKET--TA GET AWAY! BUT WHY?!

HE KNEW WE WERE IN THE CLEAR--WHY COULDN'T HE LEAVE IT BE? IT JUST DON'T MAKE SENSE...

NOTHIN' HE DID MADE SENSE, POPS! THAT LOON BELONGED IN A BOOBY-HATCH!

HOURS LATER, AS DAWN BREAKS OVER CLOVERFIELD, PEEVY IS DRIVEN TO HIS COUPÉ...

YER FREE TO GO, POPS...THE BOSS SAID TO TELL YA!

I AM, HUH...?

WELL, THANK YER "BOSS"--*MR. HUGHES,* FOR ME... I JUST WISH THINGS'D TURNED OUT DIFFERENT...

MR. WHO?

HUGHES...HOWARD HUGHES! Y'KNOW--THE BIG GUY YOU WORK FOR!!

HUH?!

AAH...I WAS WISE TA YOU MUGS ALL ALONG! I KNEW IT HAD'TA BE HIM--EVEN WITH THE GET-UP!

HMPH! THINK YA GOT IT ALL DOPED OUT, EH, POPS?

YEA--"COLONEL MAYBERG--HUGHES' PERSONAL BODY-GUARD"--*HAH!* I GOT'CHER NUMBER, PAL...

...AN' I'D BET MY LAST SAWBUCK, THE FANCY-PANTS WITH YA IS ONE NOAH DIETRICH!

YA DON'T SAY...

LISTEN, I DIDN'T JUST FALL OFF TH' TURNIP TRUCK, Y'KNOW! I' BEEN AROUND--I READ TH' MAGAZINES!

OH...? THEM..."PULP" MAGAZINES?

DON'T PLAY FOXY WIT' ME, PAL--THAT STUFF'S *PABLUM!* I'M TALKIN' *NEWS* MAGS! THEY GOT THE STRAIGHT POOP ON EVERYTHING--*INCLUDIN' YOU--HEY!*

SO LONG, POPS! YER TOO WELL-READ FER THIS CROWD...KEEP Y'NOSE CLEAN!

THE DRIVE BACK TO CHAPLIN FIELD IS SLOW AND SOMBER; ENDING AT A FAMILIAR HANGAR...

AAH, CLIFF... WHATTA WASTE!

WHY'D YA HAVE'TA GO AN' BLOW YERSELF TA SMITHEREENS?

THIS PLACE JUST AIN'T GONNA BE TH' SAME...SIGH

HUH! FUNNY... I C'N ALMOST HEAR THE OL' *BULLDOG* TEARIN' UP TH' SKIES... HEH!

...RUNNIN' *SMOOTH* FER A CHANGE, TOO!

MY EARS MUST STILL BE RINGIN' FROM THAT BLAST--BUT I COULD'A *SWORE*... *NAAA!*

TH' LOCK'S BEEN JIMMIED--*CRIPES!* I *KNEW* IT--AN' TH' PLANE'S *GONE!!*

HEY--! WHO'SAT??

HUH--? BUTCH?!

WHAT TH' HECK'RE *YOU* DOIN' HERE?

...BOY, MILLIE'S GONNA HAVE A FIT 'N A HALF!

HEY...WHAT'CHA GOT STICKIN' OUTTA Y'COLLAR?

HOLY--!

Sorry about all the trouble— would've stuck around, but found out Betty skipped out on me with that RAT marco—to EUROPE via N.Y. I aim to beat 'em there, and find out WHY! Back soon— Cliff

P.S.—"THAT LAB FIRE WAS AN ACCIDENT. I WAS TOO DOPED UP TO REALIZE WHAT I'D DONE! I DON'T MEAN TO LEAVE YOU HOLDIN' THE BAG, BUT I GOTTA TRY AND SQUARE THINGS WITH BETTY."

"THIS ROCKET BUSINESS HAS JUST HAD ME SO COCKEYED, I COULDN'T SEE STRAIGHT, AND NOW I MAY BE *LOSIN'* HER BECAUSE OF IT..."

"...BUT *NOT* WITHOUT A *FIGHT!*"

OKAY KID...PLAY IT YER WAY! I JUST HOPE YA KNOW WHAT YER DOIN'...

...'CAUSE WE AIN'T OUT OF THE WOODS YET...

The End.

END OF PART 1

CLIFF'S NEW YORK ADVENTURE CHAPTERS 6 - 8

STORY AND ART BY DAVE STEVENS
LETTERING BY CARRIE SPIEGLE
CO-WRITERS ON CHAPTERS 2 & 3,
DANNY BILSON & PAUL DE MEO
ART ASSIST BY ARTHUR ADAMS, GEOF DARROW,
GARY GIANNI, MICHAEL KALUTA, STAN MANOUKIAN,
SANDY PLUNKETT, AND VINCE ROUCHER

LOOK!! THERE HE IS!!

SECORD--!! THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING!

STUFF TH' WARNING-- HE'S MINE!

TATATAT TAT

BETTY--

BETTY...

BETTY!

BETTY--

HUH--WHAT?! OHH--MARCO! I-I...

YOU'RE A NOISY SLEEPER!

I DIDN'T WANT TO WAKE YOU, BUT WE'RE ABOUT TO *LAND!* I'LL GET US SOMETHING TO DRINK...

=TSK= *WHERE* IS THAT USELESS STEWARD, ANYWAY?

THIS IS RIDICULOUS! A PASSENGER COULD *DIE* OF THIRST--

IT WAS JUST A *DREAM*--CALM DOWN...IT *DIDN'T* HAPPEN!

OPENING HER PURSE, BETTY CAUTIOUSLY STEALS A LOOK AT:

CLIFF...?*SIGH*= IS *THAT* HOW IT'S GOING TO END...WITH A POLICE BULLET?

MAYBE SO...YOU'RE A *CRIMINAL* NOW--AND YOU DON'T EVEN CARE! ALL THAT MATTERS...

...IS KEEPING THAT INFERNAL ROCKET-PACK! I *HATE* IT!!

YOU'RE JUST A BUNDLE OF TROUBLE, CLIFF SECORD-- AND I'M BETTER OFF WITHOUT YOU...=*SIGH!*=

...EVEN IF I *DO* FEEL MISERABLE...

I'M DESERTING YOU--WITHOUT EVEN A GOOD-BYE! PRETTY HEARTLESS, HUH? WELL--IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN, I GUESS...

...ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE *SOME*BODY CAME ALONG WITH A BETTER OFFER...AND MARCO CAN DO *SO MUCH* FOR MY CAREER! =*SIGH!*= I *HAD* TO GO, CLIFF... MAYBE SOMEDAY YOU'LL UNDERSTAND...MAYBE I WILL, TOO....

KKRAAKK

BU-BOOM

SPUT-SPUTT-TT

HICKSVILLE

THE ROCKETEER™

I NEED GAS--AS FAST AS YOU CAN POUR IT!!

CLIFF'S NEW YORK ADVENTURE

WHY DON'T YOU GO ON INSIDE, AND WARM YER BONES SON! THE WIFE'S GOT SAM'MICHES AN' HOT COFFEE... HELP Y'SELF!

OKAY--THANKS!

MA'AM, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW GOOD THIS TASTES-- I FORGOT WHEN I *ATE* LAST! M-MM...

LOOKS LIKE YA FERGOT TO *DUCK*, TOO! WHAT'D YOU RUN INTO, BOY-- A MEAN MULE?

=SSLUP=
NO, MA'AM... MORE LIKE A STUPID JACKASS...*ME!* I *DESERVED* THESE LUMPS!

SOON...

SHE'S ALL READY...RAIN'S LET UP A BIT, TOO! YOU FLYIN' TO A *RACE* SOMEWHERE'S?

I'M RACIN' RIGHT *NOW*, BUD--TA MAKE NEW YORK CITY AN' CATCH AN *OCEAN LINER* BEFORE IT PULLS OUT!

WHOO-EE! YOU YOUNG CITY FELLERS *SURE* GOT TH' LIFE...

HUNH! NOT ME, PAL...

...*YOU* GOT MY LAST *DIME* FOR THIS *GAS!* I GOT *NO* JOB-- MY GIRL LEFT ME-- AS A MATTER OF FACT...

...SHE'LL BE *LEAVIN'* ON THAT SHIP TOMORROW, WITH *ANOTHER GUY*-- UNLESS I GET THERE *T'NIGHT!*

GEE, THAT'S TOUGH, SON... I DON'T RECKON YOU'LL *MAKE* IT IN THIS STORM!

ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT--

--AN' I *AIM* TO! ..."*HASTA LUMBAGO*," BUD!

MANY MILES AWAY...IN A NEW YORK NIGHTCLUB...

...AND, BETTY, DEAR, YOU SIMPLY *MUST* SEE MONTMARTE! IT'S SO-O-O QUAINT...

WE'LL SEE *ALL* THE SIGHTS!

OH, RONNIE, OLD MAN...DID YOU BRING THE LATE EDITION?

AH, *YES*--HAVE A LOOK, MARCO--IT'S ALL ABOUT THAT "ROCKETEER" FELLOW! RATHER *NASTY*-LOOKING *CRASH*, EH?

HARROLDS

HMMM...

...RIGHT THROUGH A *RESTAURANT*--INCREDIBLE! HE MUST'VE BEEN KILLED INSTANTLY!

NO WAY OF KNOWING... HIS BODY WAS TAKEN BY THE *MILITARY!*

=GASP=

PLEASE EXCUSE ME...EVERYONE--!--I NEED SOME *AIR*...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I--I'M JUST A BIT DIZZY... I'LL BE FINE.

MARCO, SHE'S ABSOLUTELY *INTOXICATING!* WHERE ON *EARTH* DID YOU--?

I'VE TOLD YOU, RONNIE--HOLLYWOOD IS *FULL* OF GIRLS *JUST* LIKE HER...

ALL RIPE FOR THE PLUCKING, EH? YOU *DOG*--WHAT *HOOPS* HAVE YOU GOT *THIS* ONE JUMPING THROUGH?

THE USUAL... BUT NOT ENOUGH TO SUIT *MY* TASTES! SHE'S A STUBBORN ONE!

SHE'LL BE GOOD FOR A FEW MORE LAUGHS, BUT...

OH...TOO MUCH FOR THE GREAT SWORDSMAN, EH...?

DON'T BE *DROLL*, RONNIE!

IN THE LADIES' LOUNGE, BETTY QUICKLY CALLS LONG DISTANCE...

HE'S *GOT* TO BE ALIVE--*PLEASE*--=CHOKE= OH, PEEVY, ANSWER YOUR *PHONE!* WHY DON'T YOU *ANSWER?!*

ALL RIGHT--THANK YOU, OPERATOR... NO, I'LL TRY AGAIN LATER...

I *NEVER* SHOULD'VE LEFT! =SOB= I'M *SO STUPID*--HE WAS IN TROUBLE, AND I *LEFT!*

MIDNIGHT! AT A LONG ISLAND AIRSTRIP, CLIFF LANDS AND TAXIS TO A HANGAR...

YO!! CLIFFORD! IT'S ABOUT TIME-- I BEEN HERE ALL NIGHT!

HEY! IS THAT MY OL' PAL, GOOSE? I THOUGHT I SMELLED SOMETHIN'!

HEH! MUST BE MY LUCKY SOCKS! HEY--YOU REMEMBER THE OL' NEIGHBORHOOD CHANT?

"MOLLY-CODDLE, MOLLY-CODDLE, BOOSH-WAH-ZEE..."

"GRAB 'EM BY TH' GARTERS, AN' TOSS 'EM IN TH' SEA!"

HA-HA! YOU SAID IT, BO!

CHEEZ--IT'S GOOD T' SEE YA, CLIFF...

I BEEN CALLIN' YER PLACE FOR TWO WEEKS!

I--BEEN OUT!

LISTEN, CLIFF... THIS RICH GUY THAT I FLY FOR-- HE WANTS TA HIRE YA FOR A JOB--

NIX, GOOSE!

I'M HERE TA FIND M'GAL-- AN' THAT'S ALL! NOTHIN' ELSE!

AWW-- BUT HE'S REALLY SOLD ON YA-- I TOLD 'IM YOU WERE THE BEST! C'MON... AT LEAST TALK TO 'IM! WHAT'S IT GONNA HURT, HUH?

I SAID, NIX!

WELL-- HOW 'BOUT AFTER WE FIND 'ER, THEN? WHATTA YA SAY?

ASK ME THEN!

I WILL! YOU'LL THANK ME FOR THIS JOB--THE GUY'S A GOOD EGG!

SO...WHAT'S THE STORY ON THIS "BETTY" DAME, ANYHOW?

AH, GOOSE... IT'S A LONG ONE!

SO'S TH' DRIVE TA MANHATTAN! C'MON, GIVE! I WANNA KNOW WHAT I'M GETTIN' INTO HERE!

CLIFF RELENTS AND TELLS HIS TALE...

OKAY,-OKAY! LAST FALL: I MEET 'ER, WORKIN' ON A PICTURE--AN' IT'S INSTANT MUSH! I MEAN, I'M A GONER! WE START DATIN', AN' IT'S LIKE...

...WE WERE MADE FOR EACH OTHER! TOTAL BLISS--FOR ABOUT TWO MONTHS...

"THEN SHE GETS A PART IN THIS BUSBY BERKELEY PICTURE...*AND* THEY WANT HER IN SOME OF THE PUBLICITY SHOTS, TOO! SO, NATURALLY THEY GOTTA HAVE PICTURES TAKEN--BATHING SUITS AN' SUCH, RIGHT?

"HE TELLS 'EM HE'LL MANAGE 'EM--GET 'EM IN *ALL* THE TRADE MAGAZINES--THE RIGHT *PARTIES*... INTRODUCE 'EM TO DIRECTORS...'CAUSE *HE'S* 'MARCO OF HOLLYWOOD'! WELL, BETTY BOUGHT IT--EVEN *AFTER* I TOLD 'ER THE GUY WAS A WEASEL!

HEE-HEE! YEAH, BO!

T'AIN'T FUNNY, McGEE!

SHE DIDN'T EVEN *TELL* ME SHE WAS GOIN' TA EUROPE WITH 'IM! NO G'BYE--*NOTHIN'*! THAT BOAT LEAVES AT SUN UP! *T'NIGHT'S* MY ONLY SHOT--SO LET'S GET *MOTIVATIN'*!

OKAY--WE'LL HIT TH' *STORK CLUB* FIRST, AN' GO ON FROM THERE! ONLY--WHAT MAKES YOU SO *SURE* THEY'LL EVEN *BE* OUT ON TH' TOWN T'NIGHT?!

'CAUSE SHE LIKES TA BE *SEEN*...AND ROMEO'LL WANNA SHOW 'ER OFF!

"SO, THE GIRLS GET SENT TO 'MARCO OF HOLLYWOOD'--NOW THIS GUY'S GOT A *REP* AS A REAL MAKE-OUT ARTIST! I MEAN, HE LAYS IT ON SO THICK YOU CAN EAT IT WITH *MUSTARD*...AND THE DAMES *DO*!

"NOW, SUDDENLY I'M A SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN! SHE'S ALWAYS *OUT*, OR TOO BUSY...*HECK*, I'M NO DOPE! I KNOW WHAT GOES ON IN THOSE 'PHOTOGRAPHERS STUDIOS'--WHY, IT'D CURL TH' HAIR ON AN *EGGPLANT*!!"

R-R-R RING!

AND SO...

STORK PALACE

SPHINX

TIC

21

021 711

12

MANY STOPS LATER, IN THE WEE HOURS...

WHAT'S LEFT, GOOSE?

JUST *THIS*--AN' THE *COBALT!*

"EL MOROCCO," HUH? OKAY, BE RIGHT BACK! HEY, MOE--GIMME YER *CAP* AGAIN!

AS CLIFF WALKS IN...

I'M *SORRY*, SIR--BUT WE CAN'T ALLOW--

HERE WE GO...

AWW--CUT TH' BABBLE, BALDY!

I AIN'T NO GATE-CRASHER--I'M HERE TA PICK UP A *FARE!*

ALL DRIVERS *MUST* WAIT *OUTSIDE!!*

SURE, MAC--ONLY I GOTTA MAKE SURE I'M IN THE RIGHT CLUB, SEE...?

HERE--DIS IS DA DAME I'M WAITIN' FOR--

SHE HERE?

CLIFF LEAVES, AND...

CAB?! I DIDN'T CALL FOR ONE!

EXCUSE ME, MADAME, BUT YOUR *CAB* IS HERE!

BUT THE DRIVER--EH--HE HAD A *SNAP SHOT* OF YOU...

HUMPH! YES--YES, SHE'S WITH A LARGE PARTY! NOW, *PLEASE*...

DON'T YOU TWO BOTHER YOURSELVES! *I'LL* GO OUT AND SET HIM STRAIGHT!

THANK YOU, RONNIE...

...A SNAP SHOT... HOW ODD!

OUTSIDE...

WELL?

PAYDIRT! THEY'RE *HERE*--ONLY I CAN'T GET TO 'ER WITHOUT A *TUX*--

YOU THERE--*CABBIE!*

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO--BUT THE LADY *DIDN'T* CALL FOR A *CAB!* SO, *BEAT IT!!*

UHH...Y'KNOW, YOU'RE *RIGHT*, CHUM--SHE *DIDN'T* CALL--BUT I'M *TAKIN'* ER JUST THE SAME! AN' COME TA *THINK* OF IT... HMM...

...THERE'S SOMETHIN' *ELSE* I'LL BE TAKIN', TOO! NOW GET IN THE CAB, *BOOSHWAH*--

--OR I'LL *DRILL YA RIGHT HERE!*

INTA THE ALLEY, MOE! *DOUBLE-TIME!*

'REET!

ON THE SOFTLY LIT RECESSES OF "EL MOROCCO," THE MINUTES SLIP BY...

WHAT COULD BE KEEPING RONNIE...?

LIGHT, MISS?

WHY, THANK YOU...

CLIFF!! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!

B-BUT-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!?!

I'M TAKIN' YOU BACK TA CALIFORNIA-- NOW! GET YOUR THINGS--

NO--I CAN'T! YOU HAD NO BUSINESS FOLLOWING ME...!

I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW!

ANYTHING WRONG, MY PET?

NO--NOTHING! I WAS JUST TALKING TO A...AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE...! THIS IS--

SAVE IT!!

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE DOIN' THIS, BETTY! YOU DON'T CARE AT ALL THEN... DO YA?

CLIFF--

I GUESS YOU NEVER DID!

CLIFF, STOP IT-- PLEASE!!

JUST A MINUTE, YOU! WHAT IS ALL THIS?

BUTT OUT, BOOSHWAH!

WHY, YOU SCRUFFY, LITTLE--

CLIFF-- NO!! LET GO OF HIM--LET-!

KRASHH

LEM ME GO, YOU YELLOW-BELLIES!

HOLD HIM FAST! THIS MONGREL IS MINE!!

I'M GOING TO TEACH HIM SOME MANNERS--

--FROM MY BOOK!

NO!!

STAY BACK, BETTY! MARCO CAN HANDLE THAT UPSTART...

STOP IT!!

NO MORE!! MARCO--

THE YOUNG LADY IS RIGHT-- THAT WILL BE QUITE ENOUGH!

NOW, TAKE YOUR THUGS AND *LEAVE*--BEFORE I *THROW* YOU OUT!

LET GO OF ME!! *WHO* DO YOU THINK YOU *ARE*?!

ONE WHO *LOATHES* PARASITES SUCH AS YOU...

...PREYING ON NAIVE, YOUNG WOMEN! OH, YES...

...I KNOW *ALL* YOUR DIRTY SECRETS, *MARCO-VITCH!* NOW, *GO!*

C'MON, MARCO--LET'S COOL OFF A BIT... THAT YOUNG PUP WON'T BOTHER YOU AGAIN...

OH, CLIFF...

MMRFF LEMME ALONE...

IT'S ALL RIGHT, CLIFF...

...HE'S JUST TRYING TO HELP...

IT'S VERY KIND OF YOU TO DO THIS!

NONSENSE, I'M MERELY LOOKING AFTER MY OWN INTER-ESTS!

AWW--I WAS AFRAID O'THIS...

CLIFF, YOU JUST AIN'T THE *SCRAPPER* YA *USE TA* BE!

'EVENING, GANDER... I TRUST YOU'LL SEE TO OUR *FRIEND* HERE?

YOU BET, SIR... UH, CLIFF? THIS'S THE GUY I'VE BEEN TELLIN' YA ABOUT--

SUNSHINE

JUST... GET ME IN TH' CAB! OOOH!

CALL ME...*JONAS*, SECORD! I WAS HOPING TO BUMP INTO YOU TONIGHT--I'VE A SMALL JOB FOR A FLIER OF YOUR EXPERIENCE!

I'M PREPARED TO PAY YOU *QUITE* WELL... CAN WE--?

AWW--*TAKE THE AIR*, WILL YA?! COFF G'WAN--*BEAT IT!* LEMME *BE*...

AS YOU WISH...

...BUT SHOULD YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, GANDER KNOWS WHERE TO CONTACT ME, DAY OR NIGHT!

DON'T HOLD YER BREATH!

CLIFF--I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...EXCEPT, I'M SORRY!

HUH! YOU AN' ME *BOTH*, SISTER! BUT IT'S A LITTLE LATE FOR THAT NOW!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?

'AW, *CAN IT.* BETTY! I'M *THROUGH* PLAYIN' TH'CHUMP! LOOK, JUST TAKE A WALK, HUH? GO ON BACK TO YOUR "CAFÉ SOCIETY" *SKUNKS!* YOU BELONG WITH 'EM!

CLIFF. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--I DON'T *WANT*--

CLIFF!! ARE YOU *SLAP-HAPPY???* *YOU BLEW IT!* YA *HAD* 'ER--AN' YA *BLEW IT!!*

I CAN'T *BELIEVE* THIS--!!

BULL!! GET OUTTA THE CAB!

LET'S GO, GOOSE!

SHADDAP, GOOSE! I *KNOW* WHAT I DID...

ANYTHING I CAN DO?

;SIGH; YES... YOU SAID YOU HAD A *JOB* FOR HIM...

MAKE HIM TAKE IT! HE'S PROBABLY USED EVERY PENNY TO GET HERE... HE'LL BE *BROKE* NOW!

YOU CARE FOR HIM A GREAT DEAL--BUT DON'T WORRY...

...SO LONG AS HE'S IN NEW YORK, I'LL BE STICKING TO HIM... LIKE A *SHADOW!*

WELL...WE CERTAINLY TOLD *HER*, DIDN'T WE?

ZIP IT, GOOSE!

OKAY--SO YA GOT ROUGHED UP, AN' THEY HAD TA CARRY YOU OUT--*SO WHAT!* IT GOT 'ER *OUTTA* THERE. SHE WAS READY TA *LEAVE* WITH YOU, CLIFF!

YEAH... OUTTA *PITY* =SIGH= NO, THANKS!

I FINALLY GOT THE MESSAGE IN THERE...IT DIDN'T SINK IN UNTIL I *SAW* HER, MIXIN' IT UP WITH ALL THOSE SOCIETY TYPES. I GOTTA FACE FACTS, GOOSE... *THAT'S* WHERE SHE BELONGS; *NOT* WITH A TWO-BIT PROP-JOCKEY LIKE ME!

SO, AFTER COMIN' 3,000 MILES, YOU'RE JUST GONNA STEP ASIDE AN' *LEAVE* HER TA SOME BOOSHWAH *HANKY-SNIFFER?!*

"GOOSE, I'M LEAVIN' HER TO DO WHAT *SHE* WANTS. IT'S *HER* LIFE! I *KNOW*--I WAS *NUTS* TA COME AFTER HER LIKE THIS--BUT *YOU'VE SEEN* HER...

"...AN' IF YOU CAN SIT THERE AN' TELL ME YOU *WOULDN'T* HAVE DONE *EXACTLY* TH' SAME THING IN MY SHOES...

"...THEN, YOU'RE A BETTER MAN THAN I AM, GUNGA DIN!"

PIERSIDE, NEW YORK HARBOR, 7 AM...

REX

FRENCH L

CLIFF--WHY YA DOIN' THIS? IT'S JUST RUBBIN' *SALT* IN THE WOUND!

A LAST LOOK, THAT'S ALL...

AHH-LOUSY *SHINER!*

SMARTS, HUH?

HERE... *YOU* BE MY EYES!

"HEY, CLIFF--I SEE THE *BOOSHWAH*...

REX

"...UP ON THE MAIN DECK--BUT I DON'T SEE *BETTY*. MAYBE SHE..."

AHH--SHE'S PROBABLY IN HER-- I MEAN *THEIR* CABIN, GETTIN' DOLLED-UP FOR 'IM!

FEH! LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!

NORTH BEACH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT, ONE HOUR LATER...

TWA

NC17312

TWA

TWA

GOOD MORNING, MA'AM! WILL YOU BE WITH US FOR THE ENTIRE FLIGHT?

YES... ALL THE WAY TO LOS ANGELES.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK, CLIFF! TH' BOSS SHOULD BE WAITIN' INSIDE...

SWELL! I WANNA GET THIS OVER WITH!

MR. JONAS?

IT'S ME-- CLIFF SECORD! YOU IN HERE?

SLAM!

HEY!! WHAT--?

GAAAA!!

DON'T DO THAT!!!

THE ROCKETEER™

'MORNING, SECORD! SORRY TO HAVE STARTLED YOU... DOUGHNUT?

:PUF-PUF: UH--IN A MINUTE... :WHEW:

NIGHTMARE at Large!

LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS THEN, SHALL WE? SECORD, IN MY LINE OF WORK I OFTEN FIND MYSELF IN NEED OF "SPECIALIZED SERVICES." MR. GANDER, FOR INSTANCE, PROVIDES HIS AUTOGIRO FOR A MONTHLY RETAINER...

YOU, HOWEVER, CAN OFFER *MUCH* MORE!

I'M NOT SURE I FOLLOW...

I'LL SPEAK PLAINLY, THEN--

--I *KNOW* WHAT YOU CARRY IN THAT CANVAS BAG!

:COFF!: WHAT?!

MISSING LINK

COME, COME, SECORD-- I *DETEST* BAD LYING! I'VE KNOWN FOR SOME TIME THAT YOU WERE IN POSSESSION OF THE *CIRRUS X-3*... AND I'M QUITE IMPRESSED BY YOUR RESOURCEFULNESS!

YOU SEEM TO HAVE A KNACK FOR BEATING THE ODDS!

SO... WHOSE SIDE ARE *YOU* ON-- HITLER'S OR J. EDGAR'S?

HEH-HEH, *NEITHER!* I OPERATE... INDEPENDENTLY OF *ALL* GOVERNMENT AGENCIES!

I DO WHAT IS *MORALLY* RIGHT--BY *MY* RULES!

SO, WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

THAT DEPENDS... WILL IT STILL *FLY?*

WELL...

HAH-HAH! *HERE*... WILL THIS EARN YOUR TRUST?

FIVE HUNDRED SMACKERS?! HOLY MOSES! W-WHAT KIND'A JOB *IS* THIS?!

A *DANGEROUS* ONE...SO LISTEN CLOSELY!

"TONIGHT, YOU WILL ACCOMPANY GANDER TO THE BOWERY. THERE IS A BUILDING THERE--A HAVEN FOR CRIMINALS OF ALL KINDS--A *RATS' NEST*...

"...GO THERE!"

THAT'S *IT*, CLIFF--KEEP Y'HEAD DOWN!

HOTEL

SUITS $4.95

"BELOW THE BUILDING IS A GANGLAND BAR.

"AT THE ENTRANCE, YOU WILL BE MET BY MY OPERATIVE, POSING AS A CRIMINAL...

"...HE WILL LEAD YOU INSIDE, AND INSTRUCT YOU FURTHER."

WELL!

FOLLOW MY LEAD. GET TO THE STAIRS-- TOP FLOOR: ROOM 1305. LOOK FOR ANYTHING THAT WILL IDENTIFY THE OCCUPANT. LEAVE BY YOUR... *OWN* METHODS.

MY OL' PAL, JUNIOR FINGERS!

WATCH 'IM, BOYS--

--OR HE'LL HAVE YER *WALLETS* B'FORE YA CAN *SPIT!*

C'MON IN, JUNIOR-- I'LL BET'CHER BONE DRY!

...I HEARD YOU WAS OUTTA TOWN!

I *WAS!* JUST GOT BACK! SAY, LISTEN... MY PAL HERE NEEDS A PLACE TA LAY LOW-- ANY VACANCIES?

HEY, HAP!

ICE-PICK...

ONLY BETWEEN YOUR EARS, CHUMP!

WELL, AIN'T THIS A PIP-- I'M SUDDENLY *TWICE* AS UGLY!! MAYBE IT'S THE *LIGHTS*--

BLAM

KLISH

BLAM

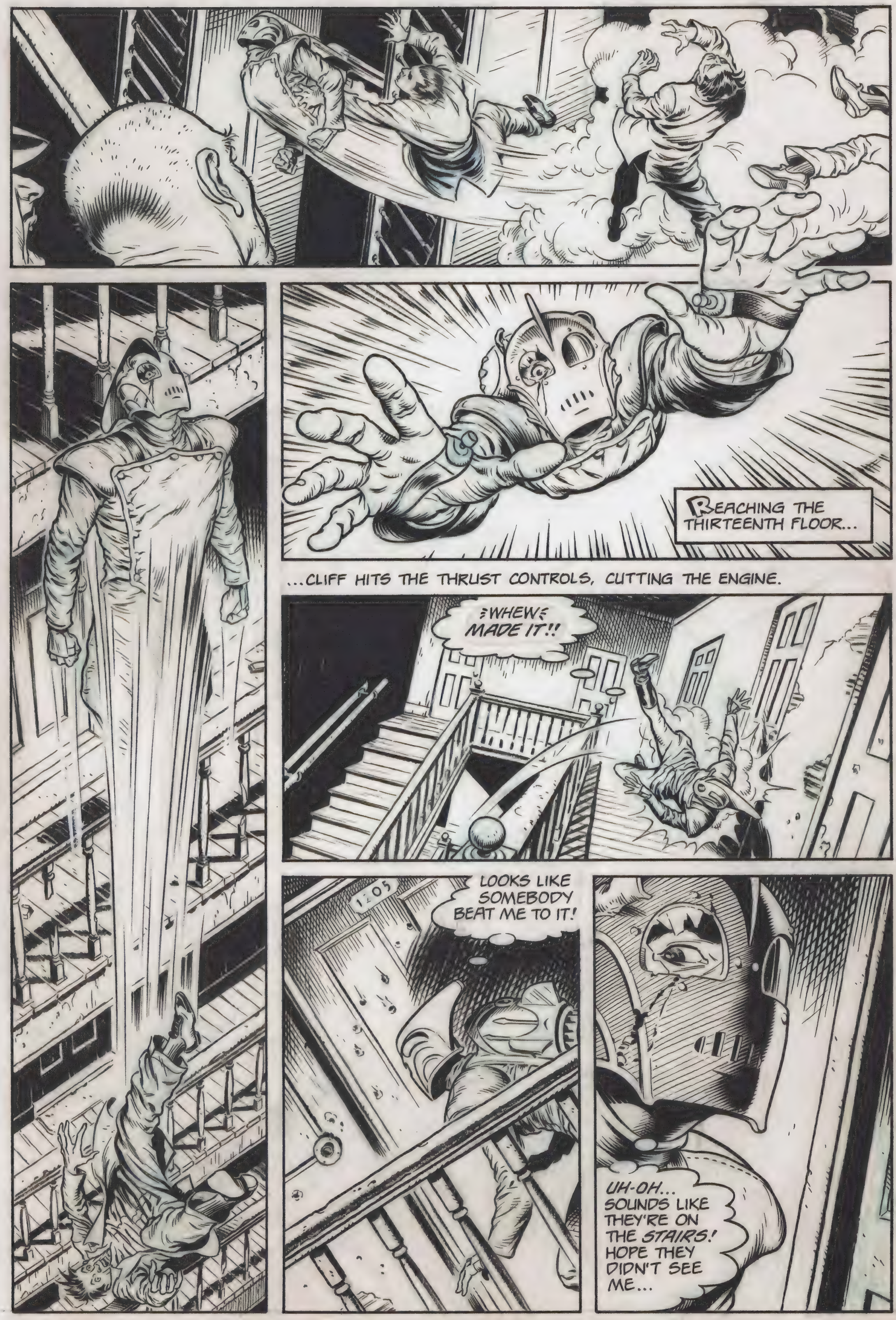
MOVE, SECORD!!

BLAM BLAM

BLAM

CRASH

CLICK


REACHING THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR...
...CLIFF HITS THE THRUST CONTROLS, CUTTING THE ENGINE.
WHEW! MADE IT!!
1:05
LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY BEAT ME TO IT!
UH-OH... SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE ON THE STAIRS! HOPE THEY DIDN'T SEE ME...

WHY DID I LET JONAS TALK ME *INTO* THIS?! JEEZ! IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY WAS *MURDERED* IN HERE!

WELL, THEY AIN'T GETTIN' *ME*--NO, SIR! I'M GETTIN' OUTTA HERE FASTER'N--

TEENA!

YESSS!!

JONAS?! THAT WAS YOU DOWNSTAIRS! I DON'T...HEY, WHAT IS THIS? YOU SET ME UP!

WITH GOOD REASON--IT'S OBVIOUS YOU KNEW THE ANIMAL STAYING IN THIS ROOM! YOUR REACTION TOLD ME MUCH, BUT I NEED MORE FROM YOU--I NEED THE TRUTH!!

THIS SNAPSHOT--IT WAS TAKEN TEN YEARS AGO, YES?

>SIGH< YEAH...FALL OF '28. I WAS SIXTEEN THEN. I'D HOOKED UP WITH A CARNY TROUPE--THESE WERE SOME OF THE PERFORMERS...

I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT IN RECENT WEEKS, ONE BY ONE, THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THIS TROUPE HAVE ALL BEEN TRACKED DOWN... AND MURDERED!

THEIR SPINES SNAPPED!!

SPINES SNA--? NO! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE--HE'S IN THE DEATH-HOUSE! I--

THAT PICTURE OF TEENA SAYS OTHERWISE!

HE WAS THE OCCUPANT OF THIS ROOM! THE ONLY MEMBER OF THE TROUPE UNACCOUNTED FOR--UNTIL SHORTLY BEFORE DAWN THIS MORNING, WHEN I FINALLY FLUSHED HIM OUT! UNFORTUNATELY... HE ESCAPED!

YOU'RE HIS NEXT AND LAST VICTIM--WHY?

NO... THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE, SOMEONE WHO WASN'T IN THE PHOTOGRAPH, ORSINO--THE ESCAPE-KING! WHAT IF--?

BAM BAM!

THEY'VE FOUND US! QUICK--OUT THE WINDOW! I'LL HOLD THEM OFF--

YOU AND GANDER FIND THIS ORSINO-- BEFORE THE KILLER DOES!

KLISHH

GOOSE?! WHAT THE HECK IS HE-- UH-OH!!

CLIFF DIVES BELOW THE ONCOMING MACHINE!

=OOF!!= DOGGONIT, GOOSE!

SLOW DOWN, YOU CRAZY IDIOT!!

GOOOOSE!!

DRINK MOXIE

RADIO IN-- HAVE 'EM CHECK WITH BOOKING AGENTS FOR "THE GREAT ORSINO." HE *MUST* BE PLAYIN' CLOSE BY, OR THIS KILLER WOULDN'T BE IN NEW YORK!

GLAD Y'COULD MAKE IT, BO'!

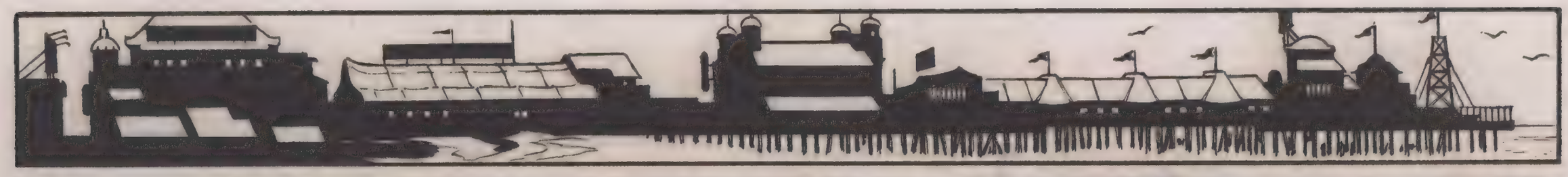
TO HEAR IS TO OBEY, SAHIB!

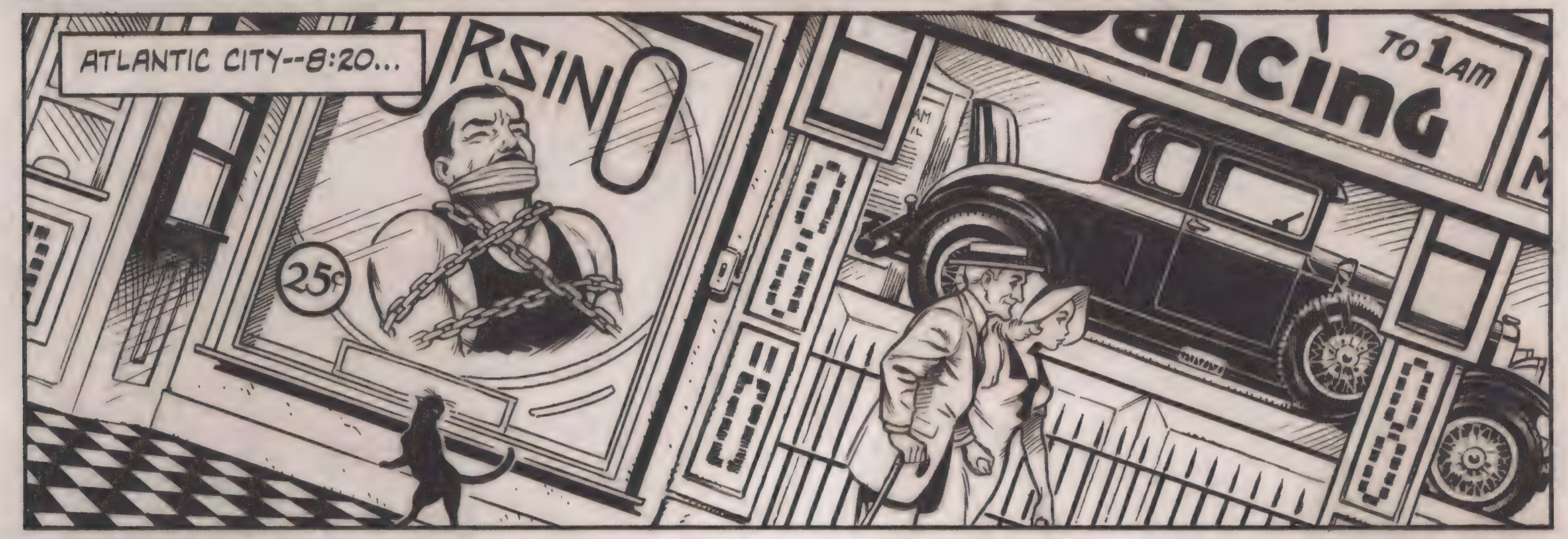
AT THAT MOMENT, BACK IN ROOM 1305, THE DOOR FINALLY GIVES WAY...

CLIFF--I GOT IT! ORSINO'S PLAYING IN ATLANTIC CITY TONIGHT AT 8:00!

IT'S 7:30-- IT'LL TAKE US AN HOUR TO GET THERE!

THEN GIVE IT ALL SHE'S GOT--!




ATLANTIC CITY--8:20...
25¢
TO 1AM
ancing

AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...

...TO PERFORM THIS NEXT AMAZING FEAT, I SHALL NEED A VOLUNTEER FROM THE AUDIENCE!

DEATH STALKS THE MIDWAY!

LIKE A DRAGONFLY DRAWN TO GLITTERING LIGHTS, THE AUTOGIRO DESCENDS ON ATLANTIC CITY'S FAMED STEEL PIER...

STEEL PIER
PHOTOPLAYS
BIG EXHIBITS
GAME ROOM
BABY ANIMALS
MUSIC
DANCE
DELUXE SHOW
SPECIAL DISPLAY
AMOS AN
STEEL PIER
BENNY GOODMAN ORCH
THE GREAT ORSINO
STEEL PIER
COMING-JIMMY DORSEY GLENN MILLER
BOB CROSBY TOMMY DORSEY ABE
GENE KRUPA WOODY HERMAN
BOB CHESTER CHARLES BAR
3 FEATURE PHOTOPLAYS
FEATURE PHOTOPLAYS
DELUXE VAUDEVILLE
CHESTRA DAILY
CIRCUS-DIVING HORSES
QUEEN OF THE CLOUDS
PIER!

STEEL
BENNY GOO

SHAKE IT UP, GOOSE-- AND HOPE WE'RE NOT TOO LATE TO SAVE ORSINO'S NECK!

I'D OUGHTA BE NEAR THE END OF HIS ACT BY NOW...

THEN LET'S HOPE THIS WON'T BE HIS LAST ESCAPE, BOY!

ON THE BALLROOM STAGE, ORSINO FACES HIS UNEXPECTED "VOLUNTEER"!

LOTHAR!

I WON'T KILL YOU HERE... TOO MANY *WITNESSES!* DO YOUR TRICK--

--IF YOU DARE!

HOLY CROW! WHAT ZOO DID *HE* BREAK OUTTA?!

L-L-LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FOR MY FINAL ILLUSION, I OFFER YOU...

THE PHAROAH'S SARCOPHOGAS...

The GREAT ORSINO

...GATEWAY TO THE REALM OF *SHADOWS!*

IF MY GRACIOUS ASSISTANT WOULD CARE TO STEP INSIDE?

I'M GOING TO *GRIND* YOUR BONES!

I INVOKE THE GODS OF THE ANCIENT NILE! *ISIS... OSIRIS... ANUBIS!*

BEHOLD!

THE SECRET OF THE PHAROAHS!

THANK YOU, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THAT CONCLUDES THIS EVENING'S PERFORMANCE.

The GREAT ORSINO

BOO!
FAKE!
WHADDA PHONY!
DROP THAT DANGED CURTAIN! ORSINO--GET OUTTA THERE!
ORSINO FLEES, AS STAGE HANDS RUSH IN FROM THE WINGS...
AS THE HEAVY CURTAIN DESCENDS...

WHAT TH' *HECK--?!*

YOU!

LOTHAR!!

HEH-HEH-HEH!

YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

AIM A SPOT DOWN HERE!

JEEZ, HE WENT CLEAN THROUGH TO THE *DRINK!*

AND, WRAPPED IN THOSE WEIGHTS, TO THE *BOTTOM!*

I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, OL' PAL!

CLIFF! FIRST LOTHAR, NOW YOU! BROTHER, I NEED A STIFF BELT.

I'LL *SECOND* THAT!

WE'VE GOTTA TALK, ORSINO—IN *PRIVATE!*

ORSINO'S DRESSING ROOM...

...AND EVERY CARNY IN THAT PHOTO, EXCEPT YOU, ME, AND LOTHAR, IS *DEAD!*

MY GOD... ALL THAT BLOOD SPILLED FOR HER...

SO, IT WAS A *DAME* THAT LOOSENED THAT GOON'S NUT! COME ON, CLIFF-- GIMME THE STRAIGHT SKINNY!

BACK IN '28, I... WORKED THE CARNY CIRCUIT, AS ASSISTANT TO "THE GREAT ORSINO." IT WAS AUGUST. WE WERE SET UP OUTSIDE DETROIT...

"I WAS IN MY USUAL SPOT...

...LOCKED IN A TRUNK UNDER TWELVE FEET OF WATER, WAITIN' FOR ORSINO TO SPRING ME!

LOTHAR WOULD HOLD UP THIS BIG HOUR-GLASS; LETTIN' THE CROWD KNOW HOW CLOSE MY LUNGS WERE TO BLOWIN' OUT LIKE CHEAP TIRES!"

"BUT, ORSINO ALWAYS GOT THAT TRUNK OPEN.

THE CROWD ATE IT UP...

...ESPECIALLY *TEENA*, ONE OF THE SIDE SHOW MIDGETS."

OH, *HI*, LOTHAR! UM, EXCUSE ME...

UH... H-HELLO, TEENA, I, UH--

OH...THANKS, TEENA.

YOU'RE WELCOME. I'M MAKING MY SPECIAL FRIED CHICKEN TONIGHT, A FAMILY RECIPE...

WORLD OF WONDER

"SHE KEPT TALKIN', BUT I WASN'T LISTENIN'...

OOPS!

THWONG

"HER NAME WAS *RUBY.*"

SHE'D BEEN GIVIN' ME THE EYE...

...AND IT WAS BURNIN' A HOLE RIGHT THROUGH ME!"

...SO, I'LL EXPECT YOU ABOUT FIVE?

HUH? YEAH, SURE...

"LIKE A HEEL, I NEVER SHOWED UP. BUT, I WASN'T THINKIN' TOO CLEAR THAT NIGHT...

...RUBY'D MADE SURE OF THAT. I JUST WISH TEENA HADN'T COME LOOKIN' FOR ME."

DON'T CRY, TEENA...HE AIN'T *WORTH* IT.

HE DON'T KNOW *REAL* BEAUTY.

THAT'S SWEET, LOTHAR. WOULD YOU LIKE SOME COLD CHICKEN BEFORE THE SHOW?

I SURE WOULD.

I'M ON!!

WHERE'S MY ASSISTANT?!

IF THAT KID QUEERS THIS ACT--

LOONS

--HE'S THROUGH!

MR. ORSINO...?

UM...

YEAH--SHE'S SURE *SEEN* IT ENOUGH!

MR. ORSINO, I KNOW THE ACT.

GIVE HER A TRY, ORSINO!

NO! IT'S DANGEROUS FOR HER!

WHY, 'CAUSE SHE'S TOO SMALL?! SHE CAN DO IT IF SHE SAYS SO!

GO ON, TEENA-- SHOW 'EM WHAT YOU GOT!

"SOMEHOW, TEENA GOT LOTHAR'S STEAM DOWN, AND THE ACT WENT ON..."

YOU SAVED SECORD'S JOB, LITTLE LADY... HE OUGHT TO LOVE YOU FOR THIS.

GOSH... YOU REALLY THINK SO?

"BY THE TIME I GOT THERE, IT WAS TOO LATE."

=CHOKE= N-NO...

"HER TINY LUNGS COULDN'T HOLD ENOUGH AIR. SHE'D DROWNED."

NOOOOOOOO!!

LOTHAR CRACKED. HE SPOTTED ME AND WENT STRAIGHT FOR MY THROAT. IT TOOK THREE CARNIES TO PULL HIM OFF... HE *KILLED* ONE OF 'EM, AND WENT TO *SING-SING* FOR IT!

THAT NIGHT I PACKED UP MY GEAR AND LEFT THE CARNIVAL... FOR GOOD.

YEAH, POOR TEENA... A REAL SHAME.

BUT THE SHOW MUST GO ON. WHAT SAY I PICK UP A FEW FRIENDS, AND WE HIT THE BOARDWALK?

ON THE BOARDWALK, THE FELLOWS RENDEZVOUS WITH THEIR "DATES" FOR THE EVENING.

Freeman Phillips COUNTY FAIR DANCE BARN

WIN CIGARS

BIGGEST GREATEST

HOUSE OF DEATH

SAY, GIRLS, HOW 'BOUT A LITTLE TRIP UP THE RIVER STYX?

I'M GAME...

RIVER WHAT?

CLOSED

OPEN HER UP FOR ONE MORE RIDE, EARL. HERE'S A *FIN* FOR YOUR TROUBLE.

HOUSE OF DEATH

EEEEEEEE!

ART models

HOUSE OF

GEE, CLIFF... DON'T YOU LIKE ME?

OH, SURE, YOU'RE SWELL... IT'S JUST THAT I--

RIP

I'VE *GOT* A GIRL BACK IN L.A., ER, THAT IS, I *DID*... ≥SIGH≤ AH, SKIP IT!

OKAY.

HEY! I THINK YOUR PAL FELL OUT!

HUH?!

BLUB BLUB

FOR TEENA...

YOUR DEBT IS PAID!

ONE MURDERER REMAINS...

THE DRY WOOD AND PAPIER-MACHÉ ARE EASY TINDER FOR THE GRUESOME TORCH.

HAHAHAHA, ORSINO! BURN IN HELL!

OH, MY GOSH! NOW WHAT?

:GULP: ONLY ONE WAY DOWN!

BUT I CAN'T SWIM!

:EEEEEE!!:

THAT'S ONE OF 'EM, OFFICER!

WHAT HAPPENED, MAC?

MANIAC TRIED TO *KILL* US... MY FRIENDS... *STILL INSIDE!*

TOO LATE-- THE WHOLE PLACE IS GOIN' UP!

GOTTA HELP 'EM-- *LEMME GO!*

HOUSE OF DEATH

CLOSED

WHUP

WHUP

WHUP

UHHHH! WHAT HIT ME?

HEY--! WHERE'S THAT KID?

JONAS...!

THAT'S *TWICE* TONIGHT HE'S SAVED MY BACON...

HERE GOES NOTHIN'!
I ONLY HOPE THEY'RE STILL ALIVE! I'VE GOTTA STOP LOTHAR SOMEHOW...
HOLY MOSES!!

ORSINO!

GOOSE!

A MOVEMENT FROM ABOVE CATCHES CLIFF'S EYE...

HANG ON, I'M COMIN'!

=KOFF KOFF= EVERYBODY OKAY?

ORSINO...?

NO, SECORD... ME!!

YOU THINK THAT HELMET WILL PROTECT YOU FROM LOTHAR?

LOTHAR! SECORD IS NOT THE ONE YOU WANT!

I AM... REMEMBER?

YES!

YOU WON'T ESCAPE ME TWICE, MAGICIAN...

AARR!

FWOOSH

KRAK

AHHHH! I'M BURNING! HELP ME!

I'LL TAKE YOU TO HELL WITH ME!!

WHA-? NO!!

NO!

LET GO OF ME! NOOOO!!

ORSINO...?

WELL DONE, MY FRIEND! TILL WE MEET AGAIN, EH?

HUH--? JONAS!

GEE... YOUR POOR FRIEND...

CLIFF? DON'T WORRY 'BOUT HIM... HE CAME OUT *FLYIN'*!

HUH?

THE FOLLOWING DAY, IN A MANHATTAN HOTEL ROOM...

ALL PACKED UP, EH? THEN YOU WOULDN'T WANNA LEAVE WITHOUT *THIS!*

HUH?

=*HEY!*= HOW'D YOU GET IT *OUT?* THAT WHOLE PLACE WENT *UP!*

JONAS! NEED I SAY MORE?

HUNH! THAT GUY'S JUST PLAIN *SPOOKY!* HOW'D YOU EVEN HOOK UP WITH HIM, GOOSE?

ALWAYS ONE JUMP AHEAD OF THE COPS, TOO! IT'S BETTER'N "*GANGBUSTERS,*" BO'!

YEAH, HE'S *CRAZY* FOR IT... LIKE A *HOP-HEAD!*

ELEVA

AN' HE'S A *MENTAL MARVEL,* TO BOOT!

I KNOW HE KEPT A DAILY FILE ON THE *FREAK* SNUFFS. AND WHEN HE SHOWED ME THAT *GROUP* SNAP-SHOT, I KNEW YOUR NUMBER WAS *UP* IF WE DIDN'T PULL YOU IN, *QUICK!*

EASY! *HE* CAME TO ME; SAID HE NEEDED A PILOT AND A SECOND AUTOGIRO, AN' THAT IT'D BE *RISKY* WORK! SO, NATURALLY, I ACCEPTED!

A REAL *MIXER,* AIN'T HE?

SO, HOW *DID* HE KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT *ME?* MY PAST... STUFF *NOBODY* KNEW! LIKE *TEENA...* AND EVEN THE *ROCKET-PACK,* TOO!

AN' AS FOR THE ROCKET-PACK... AH, *I* KIND'A TOLD 'IM! I SNUCK A LOOK IN YOUR DUFFEL BAG WHILE YOU WERE, UH, *SLOW DANCIN'* IN THE "EL MOROCCO"!

NAA! I WAS GONNA TELL YOU ANYWAY!

SO, WHATCHA GONNA DO WHEN YOU GET HOME?

WELL, *TRY* AN' SORT THINGS OUT WITH THE *LAW!*

SORRY, CLIFF... YOU SORE?

THIS GIZMO'S STILL STOLEN PROPERTY, Y'KNOW!

METROLITAN HOTEL

=*HENH:* YEAH, BUT IT *SURE* CAME IN *HANDY!*

I'LL SAY! LISTEN, THANK JONAS FOR ME, OKAY?

COCKEYED AS IT SOUNDS, I KIND'A *LIKE* HIS STYLE!

HEH-HEH! TH' FEELIN'S *MUTUAL*, I'M SURE!

WELL, SO LONG, PAL! IT'S BEEN A *PANIC!*

REMEMBER ME TA TH' *DAMES*, YA *HOOLIGAN!*

BULLDOG CAFE

MORNIN', PEEVY, ANY WORD, YET?

YEP! TELEGRAM *JUST* CAME!

HE FLEW OUT THIS MORNIN'...SHOULD BE HERE SOMETIME *TOMORROW*. FUNNY THING, THOUGH...

...NOT A *WORD* ABOUT *BETTY!*

I GUESS HE MUST'A GOT THERE TOO LATE! SHE'S PROBABLY IN *FRANCE* BY NOW...*HMMPH!*

=COUGH= *AHEM!*

I *STILL* CAN'T FIGURE *WHY* SHE'D RUN OUT ON 'IM, MILLIE...

=SIGH= I THOUGHT THEY HAD SOMETHIN' REAL *SPECIAL* GOIN'...

I THOUGHT SO *TOO*, PEEVY...

THAT'S WHY I CAME *BACK!*

...WE'VE GOT A *LOT* OF TALKING TO DO!

PARIS WILL JUST HAVE TO WAIT... UNTIL CLIFF AND I CAN GO *TOGETHER*. IN THE MEANTIME...

END OF PART 2

COVER GALLERY

AN AD FROM STARSLAYER #1

STARSLAYER #3 BACK COVER

PACIFIC PRESENTS #1 COVER

PACIFIC PRESENTS #1 BACK COVER

PACIFIC PRESENTS #2 COVER

UNPUBLISHED PACIFIC PRESENTS COVER

THE ROCKETEER SPECIAL EDITION #1 COVER, ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO BE PACIFIC PRESENTS #5 COVER

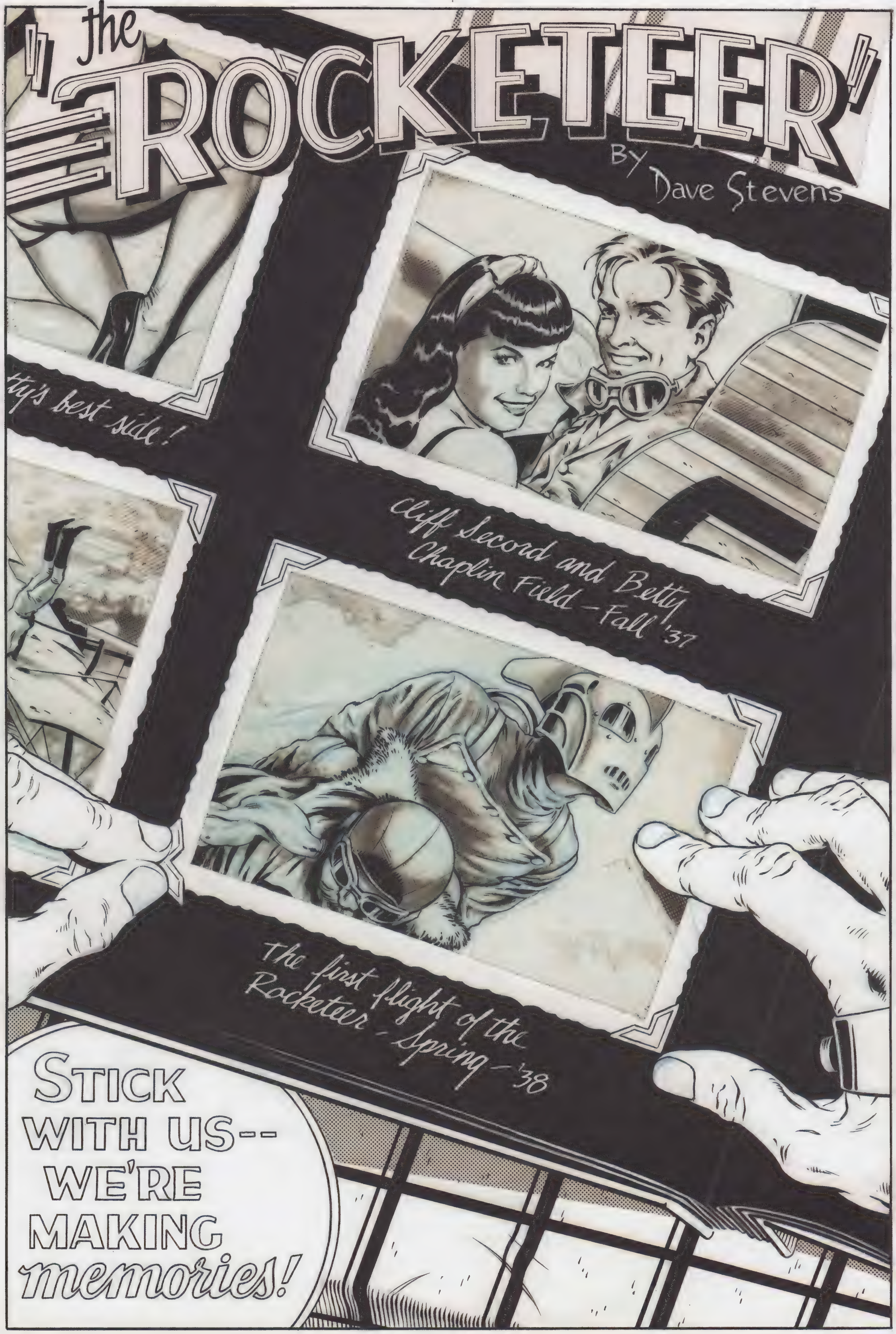
STARTING *NEXT* ISSUE: *CAREENING* THROUGH THE SKY AND *OUT* OF *THESE PAGES* COMES...

the ROCKETEER

BY

© Dave Stevens

HERE'S *EXCITEMENT*— DISHED OUT IN *BRUTAL CHUNKS*, BACK WHEN THE TEETH OF JUSTICE *BIT DEEP* INTO THE *THROAT OF CRIME!*


the ROCKETEER
By Dave Stevens
tty's best side!
Cliff Secord and Betty Chaplin Field – Fall '37
The first flight of the Rocketeer – Spring – '38
STICK WITH US-- WE'RE MAKING memories!

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THE ROCKETEER™

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PACIFIC FOR THE NEW ERA! COMICS

Rocket's RED GLARE

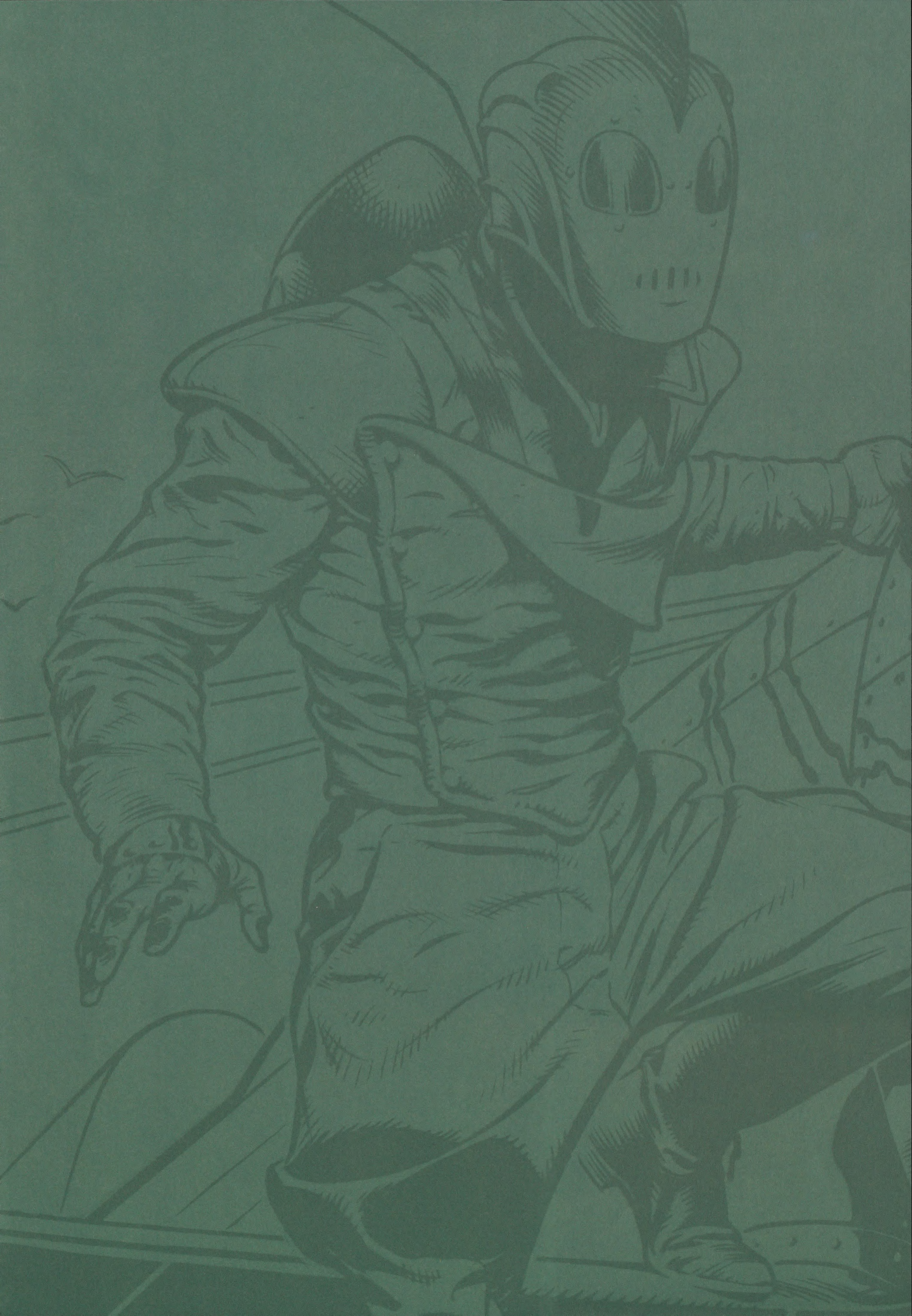
DAVE STEVENS WAS BORN IN LYNWOOD, CALIFORNIA, ON JULY 29, 1955. HIS CAREER IN COMICS BEGAN IN 1975, ASSISTING VETERAN ARTIST RUSS MANNING ON THE SYNDICATED *TARZAN* NEWSPAPER STRIP. STEVENS WENT ON TO TOIL AS A STORYBOARD ARTIST FOR HANNA-BARBARA, DEPATIE-FRELENG, AND FILMATION ANIMATION STUDIOS, WORKING ON SUCH PROGRAMS AS *SUPER FRIENDS* AND *THE GODZILLA POWER HOUR*. LATER, STEVENS WAS ASKED BY STEVEN SPIELBERG TO CREATE PRESENTATION BOARDS FOR *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*. DURING THE SAME PERIOD, STEVENS STORYBOARDED THE GROUND-BREAKING MUSIC VIDEO *THRILLER* FOR MICHAEL JACKSON AND DID PRODUCTION DESIGN FOR JACKSON'S *VICTORY TOUR*.

IN 1982, STEVENS DEBUTED THE FEATURE FOR WHICH HE IS BEST KNOWN, *THE ROCKETEER*. INITIALLY APPEARING AS A BACKUP FEATURE IN THE SECOND ISSUE OF *STARSLAYER* FROM PACIFIC COMICS, THE PULP-INSPIRED STORY OF CLIFF SECORD, A DARING STUNT PILOT WHO FINDS AN EXPERIMENTAL ROCKET PACK, BECAME AN INSTANT SENSATION. *THE ROCKETEER* WENT ON TO STAR IN HIS OWN COMIC-BOOK SERIES, AND IN 1991 WAS MADE INTO A WELL-RECEIVED MAJOR MOTION PICTURE FROM WALT DISNEY STUDIOS.

STEVENS' LUSH FIGURE WORK, PARTICULARLY HIS RENDERINGS OF THE FEMALE FORM, COUPLED WITH HIS ELEGANT BRUSH LINE, BROUGHT THE ARTIST MUCH ACCLAIM, FAR BEYOND THE CONFINES OF COMIC BOOKS. IN PARTICULAR, HIS BREATHY PORTRAYALS OF CLIFF'S GIRLFRIEND BETTY, INSPIRED BY FAMED PIN-UP QUEEN BETTIE PAGE, HELPED REVITALIZE INTEREST IN THE '50S ICON, A FACT OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGED BY PAGE, WHO BECAME CLOSE FRIENDS WITH STEVENS IN HER FINAL YEARS.

IN 1982, THE SAME YEAR *THE ROCKETEER* PREMIERED, DAVE STEVENS WON THE INAUGURAL RUSS MANNING AWARD FOR MOST PROMISING NEWCOMER. IN 1986 HE WAS BESTOWED THE COVETED INKPOT AWARD. IN 2019 STEVENS WAS INDUCTED INTO THE WILL EISNER HALL OF FAME.

ON MARCH 11, 2008, DAVE STEVENS LOST A LONG BATTLE AGAINST HAIRY CELL LEUKEMIA.



NO, I'D LOVE TO CLIFF, BUT I'M... GOING TO BE TIED UP THIS AFTERNOON!

DON'T TELL ME-- MORE "ART-PHOTOS"?

CLIFF, DON'T--WE'VE BEEN ALL THROUGH THAT!

UTS! OF ALL THE DAMES THIS TOWN, WHY'D I HAVE'TA

I'LL BET HE'S THERE